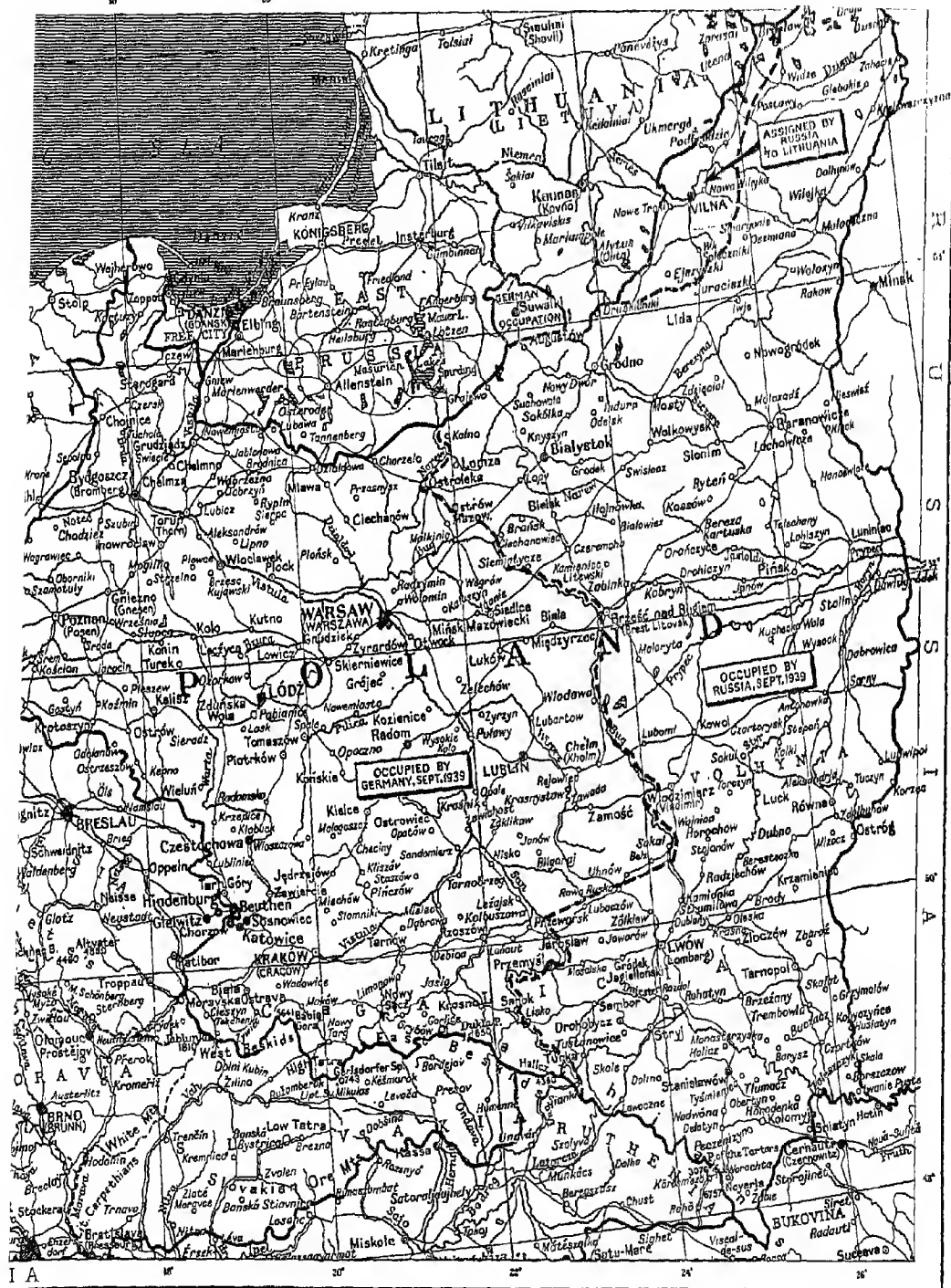




MAP OF CENTRAL EUROPE ILLUSTRATING THE D



IVISION OF POLAND, SEPTEMBER, 1939

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THE WAR OF 1939

VOLUME II



THE RT HON NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN
PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY

THE WAR OF 1939

A HISTORY DEALING WITH EVERY PHASE OF THE
WAR ON LAND, SEA, AND IN THE AIR, INCLUDING
THE EVENTS WHICH LED UP TO THE OUTBREAK
OF HOSTILITIES

EDITED BY
VERNON BARTLETT, M.P.

AND
W. GORDON WILLIAMS



VOLUME II

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THE WAR OF 1939

VOLUME II

CHAPTER I

THE POLISH WAR

BY K. R. G. BROWNE

IN the early dawn of Friday, September 1st, 1939, the long-awaited storm broke over Central Europe. At 5.30 in the morning of that bright autumn day, Germany invaded Poland. Although in so doing she dispensed with such old-fashioned courtesies as a formal declaration of war, her action came as no surprise to Poland, to Poland's potential Allies, or to the world at large.

For the past twelve months the impending storm had cast its shadow over Europe, and there were few who doubted that, sooner or later, it would break; and the nations likely to be involved made their preparations accordingly. In the weeks preceding the actual outbreak of hostilities, Herr Hitler's public utterances, no less than the open concentration of his troops along the German-Polish border, had persuaded the most obtuse onlooker that he was determined to pursue his chosen course and plunge his ill-starred country, for the second time within a quarter-century, into a conflict of which no man could foresee the final consequences or foretell the ultimate cost.

The Poles, therefore—who during the last few critical weeks had behaved with all possible restraint and dignity in the face of deliberate provocation and discourtesy—were not taken unawares, though their first intimation that a state of war existed was a sudden violent hail of bombs upon a number of their open towns. Nor, though they knew themselves to be outnumbered both on the ground and in the air, and greatly inferior to the invader in their reserves of men and material, were they at all dismayed. On the contrary, it must have been almost with a feeling of relief that the long period of suspense was ended that they summoned all their resources to resist this unjustified assault upon their country—

a country which in the past hundred and fifty years had endured more than its share of war, rapine, famine, and internal dissension.

From the outset it was obvious that, as in August 1914, Germany was pinning her faith to her favourite principle of the *blitzkrieg*—the “lightning war.” Her opening tactics strongly resembled those employed by her against Belgium in the early days of the Great War—the tactics of a successful pugilist anxious to annihilate a smaller and less experienced opponent before attending to more important business elsewhere. In Poland, as in Belgium, Germany’s method was to throw her full force of arms into a smashing knockout blow, designed to override all resistance by sheer weight of men and metal and to produce big results in a short space of time, thus setting her free to cope with any other developments that might arise. It is probable, too, that this *modus operandi* was employed partly to demonstrate the attacking-power of the Army of the Reich, and as a warning to anybody who might feel bold enough to oppose it.

At the outset, therefore, the campaign in Poland followed almost the same lines as that of 1914 in Belgium, with the invaders everywhere advancing and the defenders doggedly withdrawing. Unlike Belgium, however, Poland had to contend, not only with a new enemy in the air, but with an unexpected factor which—as will presently appear—was to destroy her last hope of surviving her brief but terrible ordeal.

Adhering faithfully to its *blitzkrieg* or bull-at-a-gate policy, the German Army opened hostilities with a furious artillery bombardment all along the Polish Frontier. This was accompanied by an up-to-date refinement in the form of venomous air raids on a dozen undefended towns, most of them far from the actual firing-line. In its capacity as the Polish capital, Warsaw was honoured with special attention in this manner, being heartily bombed five times before the war was half a day old. The student of such matters may be interested to note for future reference that the German-Polish War was probably the first in history in which the bulk of the first day’s casualties was incurred by an unarmed and practically defenceless civilian population.

There is some doubt as to which Polish community had the dubious privilege of receiving the first bomb of the war, but this honour is generally credited to an obscure village near Gdynia, Poland’s only Baltic port; and that modest hamlet would probably have appreciated the distinction more deeply had it known at the time that there was any war in progress. Thereafter the citizens of Krakow, Lwow, Kattowice, and

many another town saw the German raiders swoop from the sky in mass-formation and at ever-decreasing intervals, deposit their symbols of the Führer's might, and depart for another load.

In all, seventeen such targets were thus bombarded on the first day of the war. Not all these aerial attacks, however, were of the type that wins Iron Crosses, for in many cases the raiders were intercepted and beaten back by the Polish Air Force, which, though greatly outnumbered, functioned with such gallant efficiency that it was able to announce at the day's end that it had brought down sixteen enemy machines at the cost of two of its own.

While the inhabitants of the territory to be invaded were thus being given a foretaste of what was in store for them, the Nazi artillery was remorselessly battering the Polish border towns, while the tanks thrust forward to blaze a trail—in more senses than one—for the mechanized infantry columns. Nor was this a very difficult task, since the Polish frontier was nowhere strongly fortified, apart from the natural barrier of the Carpathians in the south. In the north the country consisted mainly of open plains, which did nothing to hinder the advance of the enemy's motorized troops. Nowhere did the invaders encounter anything comparable to their own highly publicized "West Wall," or even any such obstacles as the forts which had briefly barred their way at Liège, Namur, and Maubeuge during their attack on Belgium in the summer of 1914.

In these early hours the heaviest fighting took place in the Silesian sector, where the German drive towards Czystochowa—the Polish " Lourdes," where in less troubled times the maimed, the halt, and the sick had gathered in their tens of thousands to pray for miraculous cures—met with determined resistance and cost dearly in men and material ; on the East Prussian border, which was aflame from Grajewo on the east to Działdowo on the west ; and about the mouth of Danzig harbour. In the last-named sector, a small detachment of Polish troops earned lasting glory by their heroic defence of the Westerplatte, a combined fort and munition-dump, against repeated attacks by several enemy divisions, incessant air raids, and continuous shelling from a German cruiser lying close inshore.

Indeed, during these initial operations—and, in fact, throughout the whole campaign—the Polish Army displayed a courage and tenacity worthy of all praise. In numbers—of men, guns, and aircraft—they were greatly inferior to the enemy ; and in their inexperience of actual war conditions they were further handicapped, for the Germans were putting

into practice a number of theories evolved and proved serviceable during the Civil War in Spain. The invaders, moreover, were much assisted by the fine, dry weather, which enabled their tanks and transport to push forward as rapidly as other circumstances allowed. Despite these disadvantages, however, the Poles fought back so resolutely all along their line, before withdrawing to their prepared defensive positions, that at the end of the first day the enemy had penetrated no more than a few miles at any point.

Yet even from these early operations it became apparent that Poland's burden was likely to be too heavy for her to bear. All along the frontier the fighting continued with undiminished fury ; but although the Poles heroically contested every yard of the way, it seemed that Nature herself was siding with the invader. Normally at this season the plains of Eastern Poland are lashed by violent summer storms, which render the rough roads almost impassable and convert the low-lying fields into clinging swamps ; but the summer of 1939 had been unusually dry. Even now, when it would at least have hampered, and might even have halted, the enemy's advance, no rain fell ; and the huge Nazi war machine was slowly gathering momentum.

Although the Polish airmen and anti-aircraft units put up a gallant fight, the German Air Force, by reason of its vastly superior numbers, so dominated the sky that almost from the first the Polish High Command met with the greatest difficulty in organizing and co-ordinating the country's defences. Roads, railways, military headquarters, and even telephone exchanges were repeatedly and ruthlessly bombed. In their determination to disrupt the Polish lines of communication and spread panic in districts far behind the actual firing-line, the Germans spared neither women nor children. In Krakow, Lodz, Lublin, Posen, and a dozen other towns the roar of exploding bombs, the crash of falling masonry, and the screams of the injured were now familiar sounds. Half a dozen times a day the inhabitants of Warsaw were compelled to run for shelter, while building after noble building in their proud and ancient city rocked and fell before the onslaught from the air.

And yet, notwithstanding their numerical superiority and the sustained ferocity of their attacks, the Germans' advance in these early days was by no means uniformly successful. At several points the Poles not only held them in check, but succeeded in piercing their line ; and in these engagements the Polish cavalry played a notable part.

Almost alone among the European nations, Poland had retained her



MARSHAL SMIGLY-RYDZ
LATE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLISH ARMY

POLISH STATESMEN



M. JOSEPH BECK
LATE POLISH MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

faith in the mounted arm, for both offensive and defensive purposes. Her High Command believed that in her rolling plains and marshy lowlands bodies of horsemen were more easily manœuvrable than elaborate mechanized units; and it is likely that, had the weather been more propitious, they would have proved fully justified in this belief. Even as it was, Poland's cavalry—a gallant survival of the eighteenth century pitted against the latest scientific killing devices of the twentieth—acquitted themselves more than well on the few occasions when they had a chance to do so.

Thus, at Treuburg, on the East Prussian border, a brigade of horsemen charged the enemy line with such dash and courage that they broke through, driving the Germans before them, and established themselves temporarily in hostile territory. In the Leszno-Rawicz sector, on Poland's western frontier, a mixed force of cavalry and infantry similarly held up the invaders and forced them to retreat.

It is significant of the dauntless spirit of the country at this time, and of the adaptability of human nature to the worst emergencies, that in the latter action, as in several others, civilians of all ages voluntarily took part. As if the daily rain of bombs upon their homes were not enough to satisfy their martial ardour, old men and youths, and even women, accompanied their troops into action, acting as carriers of hand-grenades and ammunition and defiantly singing the Polish National Anthem.

For the most part, however, the German advance went relentlessly on. In the south-west, Czestochowa fell after repeated bombings that damaged its famous monastery and reduced the picturesque old town to a smouldering ruin. Krakow and Kattowice were also surrounded and overrun. The citizens of these old country towns, who but a week or so before had been quietly pursuing their normal avocations, were stunned and bewildered by the suddenness and violence of the disaster that had come upon them. In a dazed silence they—or those who had survived the preliminary air bombardment—watched the steel-helmeted invaders swarming through their broken streets and heard the deafening clangour of the tanks and transport as they pushed forward to new conquests.

At the other end of the front a similar fate befell the considerable towns of Grudziadz, a few miles from the East Prussian frontier, and Bydgoszcz, built about an important road-junction south of the Polish Corridor.

As was inevitable from the German method of war-making, which entailed the systematic destruction of open towns, the civil population suffered heavily during this period. The inhabitants of the Corridor, in

particular, found themselves unenviably placed, inasmuch as that region had always been a slightly uncomfortable salient and was now fast becoming a death-trap. From Pomerania on the west the German forces were thrusting forward to establish contact with those advancing from East Prussia; southward from around Danzig and northward from Bydgoszcz and beyond the enemy was also closing in upon Korne, Czersk, and a dozen smaller towns.

Thus it could be only a matter of time before the whole of the Corridor was in enemy hands. In Warsaw, too—bombed without respite since the first morning of the war, and now menaced by the Nazi land forces from three sides—the situation was becoming so critical that the Polish Government was contemplating withdrawal.

So matters stood at the end of the first week of the war, with the Poles giving ground almost everywhere before intolerable pressure, but as resolute as ever to make the invader pay dearly for his gains. South and west of the capital, nearly all the country had been overwhelmed, while Warsaw itself was unceasingly threatened from the north, south, and west. In the north-east the enemy had reached the River Narew, forming the boundary between the Warsaw and Bialystok provinces, while the capture of Tomaszow and Rawa brought them within forty miles of the capital on the south-eastern side.

Nevertheless, the Polish forces, handicapped though they were by the difficulties of organization and communication which must always beset an army in retreat, showed no signs of demoralization. Contrary to what might have been expected in the circumstances, they yielded comparatively few prisoners as they fell back, fighting all the way, to the natural defence line formed by the Rivers San, Vistula, and Bug. In the capital itself, despite the daily bombing and shelling to which it was subjected, life still went on. The majority of Warsaw's citizens stoutly refused to evacuate their homes, and continued to live as normally as the events of each day allowed, dwelling chiefly in their cellars, attending Mass as usual, and subsisting on what makeshift and inadequate rations were available.

(An interesting sidelight on the unbreakable spirit of these people was afforded by the case of a German airman who, his machine having been shot down, alighted safely by parachute in Warsaw's busiest street and was courteously escorted to the nearest police-station by the constable on point-duty.)

Though Germany's claims—made, on an average, about once a day, with a wealth of evidential detail—to have entered Warsaw were proved

to be quite unjustified at this date, elsewhere the invading forces pressed on with increasing speed.

Breaking through the harassed and exhausted Polish rearguard, motorized units had reached the Vistula, once the boundary between Galician and Russian Poland, and now part of Poland's traditional line of defence. Forced from this position, from which they had hoped so much, the Poles fell back to a new line farther up the banks of this river and its tributary, the Narew. To the north of Warsaw the enemy were now within thirty miles of the capital, and their patrols even penetrated into the suburb of Praga, on the right bank of the Vistula, before they were beaten off. In the south-eastern suburbs, where the great trunk-roads from Posnan, Breslau, and Krakow came together to enter the city, fighting also occurred between the defenders and the advance-guard of the German columns moving northward from Skiernewice and Lodz. Only in the remote eastern outskirts of the city was there comparative quiet—and even that, as events proved, was not to endure for long.

Yet, with the enemy within its very boundaries at certain points, Warsaw still held out—as it was to hold out, to the indignation of its besiegers and the admiration of the rest of the world, for another two weeks. Never in all its colourful history had the former capital of Russian Poland (when it ranked, after Moscow and St. Petersburg, as the third city of the Empire) been called upon to face so grievous an ordeal.

From its wide terraces, rising from the left bank of the Vistula, only a few weeks before the view had been one of serene and prosperous beauty; now there was only ruin and desolation to be seen. Of its hundred or more churches, the majority were already wrecked or irreparably damaged. The old castle, that for centuries had watched over the town from its commanding hill-site, showed plainly the wounds inflicted by weapons unimagined by its long-dead builders. The great central station, a vital link in the iron chain connecting Moscow, Leningrad, Vienna, Danzig, and Berlin, stood shattered and silent. The University, the academies and museums, the theatres, the fine public gardens, the innumerable private palaces and mansions—scarcely one of these but bore the scars of modern war as waged by the servants of the Reich.

And yet—with street-fighting in progress within five miles of the city's centre—life in the doomed capital went on. To the accompaniment of the shattering roar of bombs, the drone of hostile aeroplanes, and the mounting scream of high-velocity shells, the citizens went about their affairs with a fatalistic calm. Traffic continued in those streets which

had not been blocked by shell-holes or fallen masonry ; cafés remained open, and did not lack customers. Forced to spend much of their day below ground, the people were not to be denied all their customary pleasures on their perilous excursions into the streets.

In these dark days the spirit of Warsaw was typified by one man—the Mayor, whose place in history now seems as assured as that of his world-famous forerunner, Burgomaster Max of Brussels. Apparently it never once occurred to M. Starzynski to abandon the one-sided struggle and surrender his city to the enemy. On the contrary, the more desperate the condition of Warsaw became, the firmer grew his determination to resist the aggressors.

Under his inspired leadership the townspeople rallied to the city's defence, undeterred by the German broadcast warning that non-combatants assisting the Polish Army rendered themselves liable to execution—a warning that came rather oddly from an enemy that regarded the said non-combatants as legitimate bomb-fodder. Within half an hour of the Mayor's appeal for volunteers, 150,000 civilians were labouring like ants at the work of erecting barricades, digging trenches, and constructing tank-traps. The incredibly valiant defence of this noble and unhappy city, which had known hardly an hour's peace since the first morning of the war, forms a story that will be remembered as an inspiration to others long after those who took part in it have been forgotten.

At the time it must surely have served to inspire the rest of the Polish forces, who were still fighting grimly on, giving way only when no hope of further resistance remained. Poznan (formerly Posen, chief town of the old province of that name, and one of the most ancient cities in the country) was compelled to submit to overwhelming odds and watch the invaders making free of its well-planned streets and squares and handsome suburbs. Farther east, the smaller towns of Gniezno and Inowoclaw also succumbed, these successes enabling the Germans to claim, on September 12th, that they had now won back all the territory that was theirs before 1914. South of Posen, however, the town of Lodz—the " Manchester of Poland," and an important centre of the cotton and woollen trade—still held out, notwithstanding the fearful casualties suffered by its military defenders and civilians.

Owing to Germany's reluctance to publish official casualty lists—her practice being merely to notify the near relatives of her dead and wounded, while forbidding them to speak to others of their bereavement, or even to wear mourning—it is hard to estimate with any certainty her losses at

this period. By neutral observers, however, it was calculated that in the first ten days of the war her killed and wounded numbered between 10,000 and 15,000, most of these having been struck down during the recent fighting along Poland's new river fronts.

In South-western Poland the Germans had now advanced across the River San and surrounded Premysl (a name familiar to students of the Great War, when it had been an Austrian fortress and the scene of terrific fighting), and occupied the lesser towns of Sambor and Jaworow. In this region their principal objective was Lwow—Lemberg in German—and once the capital of Austrian Galicia. The capture of this venerable town which had known more than one siege in its long and eventful past, was greatly desired by the enemy, as it would give them command of the valuable oilfields on the Carpathian slopes and enable them to cut Poland's communications with Roumania.

In all these operations it was noticeable that the Nazis were profiting considerably by the experience gained three years previously in the Spanish Civil War. Not a few of their more seasoned units had taken part in that campaign, and so ranked as veterans by comparison with the inexperienced Poles. The tactics that had been worked out then, and employed in the drive to Madrid in 1936, were now being used again, and with even better effect: first, the unheralded and paralysing attack from the air; then the solid assault by the tanks and mechanized columns; and finally, the swift mopping-up by the mobile machine-gun sections. Its mobility, indeed, was the outstanding characteristic of the German Army, and one to which it owed most of its success—although, as shown elsewhere, it received much help from the weather.

In the air, too, Germany found her previous experience as useful as on the ground. Many of her pilots had already served their war-apprenticeship in Spain; and these had a natural advantage over the Polish aviators, the great majority of whom were flying under active-service conditions for the first time.

In view of the pitiable condition to which their country was being reduced, and the methods whereby that reduction was being brought about—methods which threatened alike the soldier in the firing-line and the shopkeeper in the remote market-town—it is scarcely surprising that many Polish civilians took up arms and fought as *franc-tireurs*. This gave the German High Command an excuse to announce on September 13th, with a peculiar disregard of the laws of reason, logic, and fair play, that this guerrilla warfare had been instituted and encouraged by the

Polish Government, and that Germany therefore considered herself at liberty to break the Polish resistance "with all means at her disposal."

In other words, the German Air Force was now officially free to abandon its pretence of respecting unfortified towns, and to indulge in the methodically ruthless bombing of every village and hamlet that happened to catch its eye. As this, however, had more or less been the German policy from the first days of the war, this warning had rather less effect than it might otherwise have done. In fact, by way of showing its reaction to this empty threat, the Polish High Command took the opportunity to publish its thanks to the civilians of Lwow for their help in the defence of that city: a subtle gesture which the enemy probably failed to appreciate.

At this date, then—two weeks after the outbreak of war—the greater part of Poland to the west of Warsaw was in the invaders' hands. The Polish Corridor, the western plains, and the important industrial area in Polish Silesia had all been taken by the enemy. Only to the immediate west of Warsaw a small pocket or salient was still holding out, doggedly defended by that section of the Polish Army which had been entrusted with the care of the capital. With their Army outnumbered at all points, and threatened by an overpowering superiority of troops, artillery, and aircraft, the Polish High Command had long realized that they could not hope to make a protracted stand on any considerable section of their front, and that their only course was to retreat, as slowly and in as good order as possible.

Even so, the rapidity of the German advance—still aided by the weather, which remained unseasonably and traitorously fine and dry—left Poland's civil population in a state of dazed bewilderment. Almost before they were able to grasp that hostilities had actually begun, their homes were in ruins or in flames, their fields patterned with bomb-craters, their sons, husbands, and brothers vanished into the unknown, and their villages alive with enemy troops and all the racket and clamour of war. Yet the heroic example of Warsaw was everywhere followed by smaller communities, where old men, women, and even children struggled to the last, and with the courage of despair, to defend their hearths against the apparently never-ending hosts of the invaders.

But the Polish Army, although almost everywhere in retreat, was not by any means a spent force. On September 15th it became known that a portion of it, amounting to some ten divisions, which had been penned in a corner in the Pomorze district of the Corridor, had carved a passage

through the German lines and reached the capital, bringing with it, as reluctant guests, about a thousand German soldiers collected in the fighting *en route*. This gallant feat of arms did much to hearten Warsaw's indomitable but weary defenders, whose situation was daily becoming more precarious.

For a new danger was now threatening the city from its fourth or western side. Along the Vistula and the Bug the Polish line was beginning to give way before the weight of the Nazi onslaught. The enemy's motorized columns, ranging far and wide, had already penetrated deeply into the country north-east of Warsaw. Some had worked forward as far even as Brest-Litovsk, a hundred miles to the east of the capital—a town that was fated to play almost as prominent a part in this war as it had played in that of 1914–18. Many of these advanced patrols pushed on so far ahead of their main bodies that they ran the risk of being cut off by the Poles, and in some cases had to rely for food and ammunition on supplies dropped by aeroplanes—a typically modern development in warfare, made possible in this case by the Germans' superiority in the air.

What Polish reinforcements could be spared from other parts of the front were being rushed to help in the defence of Lwow, which was being subjected to repeated attacks by an enemy bent on the capture of its oilfields. In one unsuccessful assault on this town the Germans lost ten tanks and an armoured car; and their total losses in this sector were probably as great as anywhere on the front.

Apart, however, from such isolated instances, it was now clear that the main Polish line was slowly disintegrating under the enemy's unrelenting pressure. Driven from their newly adopted positions along the banks of the Bug and the Vistula, the Poles had the bitter experience of seeing their hitherto orderly withdrawal degenerate into something resembling a rout. This was due to no loss of heart on the part of their troops, but to the fact that in the circumstances it was impossible for the High Command to keep fully informed of events or to maintain even wireless communication with the more distant sections of the front, where the situation changed almost from hour to hour; and the resultant disorganization contributed greatly to the ease with which the enemy advanced.

Moreover, the German airmen, now in almost undisputed possession of the skies, were so active and ubiquitous that the smallest concentration of Polish troops was liable to be marked down and bombed or machine-gunned out of existence before it had time to take cover. Special

attention of this kind was paid to the Headquarters of the Polish High Command, which was bombed out of one location after another with an accuracy and persistence that testified to the efficacy of the Nazi espionage system, established in Poland long before the war, and still functioning with typical Teutonic thoroughness. Much, indeed, of the Germans' success was due to the activities of their spies, both paid and voluntary, for in a country whose population included many of German origin, they could rely on finding numerous sympathizers with their cause.

All this being so, it is not surprising that by the middle of September the line of battle was beginning to break up into a series of isolated raids, ambushes, and skirmishes, carried out, so far as the Poles were concerned, in a spirit of desperation rather than as part of a general plan. Although their Army continued to fight with the fiercest determination and showed not the slightest inclination to sue for peace, their lack of serviceable tanks, guns, and aeroplanes was too great a handicap, while the incessant bombardment from the air to which they were daily exposed, if it did not noticeably damage their morale, could not fail to have its effect on their numbers and material resources.

Touching this last point, an instructive sidelight on the character of the campaign at this stage, and on the Nazis' methods generally, was afforded by a Polish communiqué which revealed that in the town of Lwow alone—at whose gates the enemy were still battering, having been driven back several times from its very suburbs—the list of civilians killed in air raids now totalled some 20,000 names. It was elsewhere announced, indeed, by responsible observers that in all Poland the total civilian casualties from this cause were as great as, if not actually greater than, those suffered by the armed forces. There could not well be a more striking illustration of the difference between warfare as practised in 1939 and the 1914-18 variety.

Throughout this difficult time Warsaw continued to defy the besieging army that now practically encircled it. While its citizens alternately worked on its defences and sought shelter from the bombers whirling, almost unchallenged, overhead—"as if they were joy-riding," as one eyewitness described it—its official wireless station continued calmly to transmit messages and communiqués to the outside world.

In this way it was announced, on September 15th, that certain surviving units of the Polish Air Force had raided the German air-base at Posnan, almost completely destroying it. As it was from Posnan that most of the bombing raids on Warsaw had previously been launched, this achieve-

ment brought a brief but welcome respite to the people of the capital. It was doubtless as a reprisal for this act of aggression that eighteen German bombers swooped upon the inoffensive town of Vilna—a centre of Poland's corn and timber trade, and the ancient capital of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania—dropping 200 bombs that wrought terrible destruction in the narrow streets and crowded alleys of the quaint old city and claimed so many civilian victims that their numbers could not be assessed with any accuracy. Following the example of his colleague of Warsaw the Mayor of Vilna promptly issued a combined challenge to the enemy and an appeal to his people: "Stand fast! Every inch of Poland must be defended to the last. We are all prepared to suffer, but our spirit cannot be broken."

Brave words, with no lack of brave deeds to emphasize them. But by this time, although the war had been in progress only a fortnight, it was only too apparent that something more than words or deeds—something, in fact, in the nature of a miracle—would be needed to save Poland from being wholly overrun. In her case at least, Germany's policy of the *blitzkrieg* had proved amply justified. After a bare two weeks' campaigning, the invaders now held all Western Poland, from the Baltic to the Carpathians, except for a sharp salient to the west of Warsaw, where remnants of the Polish Army were still grimly holding out.

East of the Vistula their mechanized arm was groping forward to envelop Lwow, Lublin, and Brest-Litovsk, while the last-named city was further threatened by enemy forces advancing south-eastward from the line of the River Narew. In the extreme south-east, about the border-town of Kolomea, with its oil-wells and potteries ranged along the bank of the River Prut, the Polish-Roumanian frontier had been virtually closed by the German flying-columns.

In short, only the thinly populated and desolate eastern portion of the country, stretching from Brest-Litovsk and Bialystok across the great Pripet Marshes to the Russian border, had so far escaped the more pressing attentions of the German war machine.

On the credit side of the Polish ledger the only useful item was the fact that not all the regions overrun by the enemy had been entirely subdued in the true military meaning of the word. The very speed of Germany's advance had made it impossible for her to master every square mile of country as she went along, and even in the territory occupied by her there were large tracts where no German soldier had yet been seen and where no sort of German authority had been set up.

In other words, there had been, up to this time, no real "military occupation" of Poland, as that phrase is interpreted in international law. This fact, incidentally, had apparently been overlooked by the Germans when making their protest against the Poles' guerrilla warfare; for, in the existing conditions, even the limited penalties allowed by the laws of war against *franc-tireurs* could scarcely be held to apply.

In view of these circumstances, and of the approach of autumn, it is possible that if the Poles had been able effectively to shorten their line east of Warsaw and hold it until the weather broke and the rains came to their aid, the final outcome of the campaign might have been somewhat different. The winter mud of Poland is a powerful deterrent to the most mobile forces, as Napoleon had discovered a hundred and thirty years before; and in wet weather the Nazi mechanized columns would have found it impossible to maintain anything like the rate of progress that had brought them such swift and sweeping victories.

As it turned out, however, the Poles were given no opportunity to test this theory. For it was at this juncture that Russia, displaying remarkable opportunism in her choice of the moment, elected to take a hand in the game. This she had done more than once before in Poland's variegated history, but never with such sensational and far-reaching results.

Some such development had not been entirely unexpected by experienced observers of the European scene. For some time past Russia's armies had been mobilizing along the Polish frontier, while veiled allegations concerning Poland's ill-treatment of Russians in the Ukraine and elsewhere had been circulated by methods obviously borrowed from the Hitler technique of aggression. All the symptoms, in fact, pointed to an impending demonstration by Stalin that he, too, was interested in Poland's future, and that his interest had been stimulated by the rapidity of the German advance and the threat it offered to Russia's western border.

But although this new move had not been wholly unforeseen, the abruptness with which it was made came as a surprise to the rest of the world. Early in the morning of Sunday, September 17th, the vanguard of the Red Army crossed the Russo-Polish frontier at a number of points between Latvia and Roumania, thereby taking what remained of Poland's Army very neatly in the rear and at one blow destroying her last flickering hope of delaying the German advance until the coming of the rains should give her a chance to strike back.

Adopting the made-in-Germany tactics which had proved so successful

in the cases of Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, and Poland, the Soviet embarked on this new enterprise with no formal warning to anybody concerned, apart from a Note—delivered when the first of her troops were already on Polish soil—to the Polish Ambassador in Warsaw. This document, having referred slightly to the capacity of the Polish Government and military leaders, revealed that Russia's purpose in crossing the border was to protect the interests of her nationals in the Western Ukraine and White Russia. It was further intimated that she proposed to preserve a "policy of neutrality" towards those countries with whom she maintained diplomatic relations, these including Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. It was added, kindly but rather ambiguously, that although she had sent her forces into Poland along the whole length of their common frontier, Russia had no intention of making war upon that country.

While this manifesto was being studied and digested by those to whom it was addressed—who were chiefly concerned to discover whether this new development was designed to assist Germany or to aggrandise Russia, or both—the Red Army pursued its policy of peaceful penetration. It had not very far to go, since Germany's advanced troops were now within a hundred miles or so of the Soviet border; and, in contrast to the Germans' experience in the first few days of the war, it met with little resistance, possibly because the harassed Poles by this time had little resistance left to offer.

In accordance with the etiquette now accepted as governing such operations, enormous tanks formed the spear-head of the Russian advance. Behind them came approximately half a million troops, representing every branch of the Soviet land forces: a pageant of power that must have deeply impressed the simple inhabitants of the border villages through which it passed.

Profiting by this diversion—which it may or may not have expected—the Nazi High Command seized the opportunity to broadcast, on the evening of the 17th, a demand for the immediate surrender of Warsaw, with the addendum that, if this request were not complied with, the capital must expect to be regarded as "a theatre of war"—though what it had hitherto been regarded as was not explained. To this peremptory message, however, no reply was forthcoming, possibly because the Polish Government, with Germany at the front door and Russia at the back, was too busy to occupy itself with purely academic questions.

It fell to M. Molotov, the Soviet Prime Minister and Commissar for

Foreign Affairs, to expound the Note and justify Russia's action to the nations directly concerned ; and this he did through the medium of the wireless some hours after the first Soviet troops had entered Poland. From this statement it appeared : (a) that as the Polish State had now " ceased to exist," Russia considered herself automatically released from her pacts with that country and morally bound to take action to safeguard the interests of her " blood-relatives " in Poland ; (b) that what the Red Army had been ordered to do would ultimately prove to be for the benefit of the Poles generally ; and (c)—something of an anticlimax—that severe penalties awaited any Polish civilians convicted of hoarding food.

To this confession of faith the Polish Government, which had publicly declined to recognize the existence of a state of war with Russia (which was about the only course open to it, in the circumstances), offered no immediate reply ; and the advance of the Soviet forces continued almost without a check. In the evening of this day—September 17th—the " General Staff of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army " succumbed to the communiqué bacillus and issued a statement to the effect that its troops had occupied Glebokie and Woloszyn, in Western White Russia, and taken over the railway junction at Molodeczno. Farther south, close to where the great Warsaw-Moscow highway crosses the frontier, they had forced the passage of the River Niemen and entered Mir, Korelicze, Poloneczka, and several smaller towns. Farther south again, in the Western Ukraine, they had reached Rowno, at the junction of the Lwow-Kiev and Kiev-Warsaw roads, Dubno, Zbaraz, and Tarnopol.

This represented an advance of from twenty-five to thirty-four miles along the whole Russo-Polish border. Although in the course of the day's progress the invaders found it necessary to " throw back a weak advance of units and reserves of the Polish Army," and to " bring down " seven Polish fighting-planes and three heavy bombers, the population of the newly occupied territory was said to be " everywhere greeting the Red Army with jubilation."

While the Polish Government—now functioning from the little town of Kutu, on the Polish side of the Roumanian border—was conferring with the French and British Governments on the new situation thus created and the steps to be taken to cope with it, the German Government was moved to announce, through the agency of its Propaganda Ministry, that the Russian invasion of Poland had its cordial approval. It must be left to future historians to decide whether this was a genuine cry from the heart or a case of making a virtue of a necessity.

Although Germany's campaign in Poland was now obviously drawing to a close, at least in its more active aspects, and although Russia's intervention had put the ultimate issue beyond all doubt, the spirit of the Polish people was not yet broken. Early in the morning of September 18th the Polish Government issued this valiant statement :

“ In spite of the crushing superiority on the side of Germany . . . fierce fighting is proceeding on all sectors. This fact cannot fail to influence the final result of an Allied victory. The morale of the Polish Government, of the Army, and of the people does not show the slightest change and will remain unimpaired to the very end.”

By way of a counterblast to this defiant announcement, the first Russian war communiqué was broadcast—from Berlin. This spoke of extensive Soviet advances all along their 600-mile western frontier, of the occupation of dozens of Polish towns, and of the shooting down of many Polish aircraft ; but the earlier claim that the Red Army was everywhere being enthusiastically welcomed was not, for some reason, repeated.

Thus, with the Russians pressing forward from the east, and the Germans hurrying to meet them from the west, the gap between the two invading Armies decreased from hour to hour. Hopelessly trapped though they were between these two fires, the Poles still carried on their desperate guerrilla fighting, small bodies of troops appearing suddenly and without warning to harass the German columns from the sides and rear. Warsaw was still unsubdued ; nor had the enemy yet succeeded in entering Lwow, although that town was now surrounded on three sides. At Modlin, a small fortress on the River Bug, a few miles north-west of the capital, a resolute little garrison was likewise standing firm ; and although Gdynia had fallen at last and the whole of the Polish Corridor was now in German hands, a small contingent of Poles in a fort on the peninsula of Hel, in the extreme north-west of the bay of Danzig, had yet to be persuaded to surrender.

The war, then, which had begun as one of movement on a vast scale, had now degenerated into one of small independent guerrilla actions. What organized resistance was still possible was centred almost entirely on Warsaw. That the stubborn defence of this city was a thorn in the side of the German High Command—and naturally so, for an invader's claim to have conquered a whole country does not carry complete conviction so long as that country's capital refuses to succumb—was clear

from the intense and varied efforts now being made to bring about its downfall.

The bombing and shelling of the town continued, according to the established schedule ; but, in addition, a German envoy was sent to invite the Polish military commander to abandon further resistance and thus " save the population from misery and destruction." This humanitarian plea failing (chiefly because General Czuma, the commander in question, refused an audience to the enemy's emissary), the German official wireless broadcast another ultimatum to the city, bidding it surrender within twelve hours or take the consequences. At the same time, thousands of leaflets bearing a similar message were showered on the city by Nazi aeroplanes.

To these overtures General Czuma replied, obliquely but unmistakably, by ordering the citizens to intensify their defence preparations ; while simultaneously the redoubtable M. Starzynski declared that " the city will defend itself to the last." To the admiration of all save those who strove so strenuously to humble it, Warsaw still stood like a rock in an encircling sea of enemies.

Leaving this obdurate nut to be cracked as soon as might be, the Army of the Reich pushed on towards its rendezvous with its new Russian Allies. The latter, dealing faithfully with such little resistance as it encountered, similarly continued to advance all along its far-flung line. In the north, in Western White Russia, the Soviet troops occupied the towns of Swienciany, Nowogrodek, Wolkowysk, Slonim, and Lida, with its important railway junction. In the south, in the Western Ukraine, the bewildered inhabitants of Luck, Halicz and Krasne—few of whom could have had any real grasp of the politics inspiring these peculiar happenings, and who asked nothing better than to be left in peace to wrest a living from a harsh and reluctant world—watched the endless columns of the Red Army pouring into their quiet little towns. Towards Vilna, once the capital of Lithuania, on the far north of their line, and Lwow, on the extreme south, the advance-guard of the Soviet was already feeling its way ; but a study of the map will show that, broadly speaking, the Russian forces preserved a remarkable alignment and maintained an almost uniform rate of progress along their entire front.

This in itself was evidence of the feeble resistance encountered by their armies. Indeed, there was little or nothing the Poles could do to stem this new invasion, with their own Army hopelessly broken and scattered, and the Germans closing in remorselessly on them from the

west. It says much for the inexhaustible courage of the Poles that small parties of their troops, ludicrously outnumbered and without the slightest hope of even a temporary success, fought desperately here and there until they were either killed or captured to a man. Where little opposition was offered, the Russians normally gave the defenders an opportunity to surrender ; but where this was declined their punitive measures were merciless and swift.

With the country now almost entirely in the hands of its enemies, the Polish Government withdrew across the Roumanian border and established itself in Cernauti ; and with it went certain high commanders of the Army, which had now, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist. Taking this exodus as its text, the German official wireless broadcast yet another message to the Polish people and the remnants of their Army, urging them to abandon a struggle so manifestly hopeless that their Government and military leaders had not scrupled to leave the country. But upon what remained of the Polish nation—which, no doubt, felt by this time that it might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb—even this cogent argument had no effect.

The German advance-guard, meanwhile, was making all haste to keep its appointment with the Red Army. Their joint operations at this stage had somewhat the appearance of a race against time and/or each other, with both parties endeavouring to occupy as much as possible of Poland before their actual meeting took place. In this way the Russians, moving now in three main columns, occupied Vilna, ninety miles from their starting-point on the Soviet border, with so little difficulty that the citizens were reported to have cheered the Red troops " as their deliverers from German aggression."

At the same time the Russian centre column thrust forward to the neighbourhood of Brest-Litovsk. Farther south, near the Roumanian border, the third column was reported to have taken Zaleszczyki, which a few days earlier had been the provisional seat of the Polish Government.

On September 18th, the Germans, not to be outdone in this matter of territorial gains, announced the capture of Lublin, ninety-six miles south-east of Warsaw. It was at Lublin, with its thirteenth-century cathedral, its busy corn and wool market, and its lively history dating back to its invasion by the Mongols, that, in 1569, was signed the original treaty of union between Poland and Lithuania : a treaty rather more durable than some that have been so blithely signed during the past twenty years.

Drohobycz, thirty-five miles south-east of Lwow and a valuable oil-producing centre, was also taken over by the Army of the Reich ; but honesty compelled the latter to admit that Lwow itself, though now "completely surrounded," was still obstinately refusing to hoist the white flag. A later communiqué added, with a touch of modest pride, that in the country between Brest-Litovsk and Wlodzimierz, seventy miles due north of Lwow, the German forces operating in the south of Poland had made contact with those from the north, thus completely encircling some 96,000 square miles of invaded territory. "Naturally," as this communiqué very reasonably pointed out, "this tremendous area is not yet completely free of Polish troops. Scattered remains are still to be found . . . but soon the rest of the Polish Army will march into the German prison camps."

The actual meeting of the German and Russian Armies—the final closing of the pincers on unhappy Poland—took place on the evening of September 18th at Brest-Litovsk. This choice of venue suggested either an ironic joke of Fate or the exercise of a peculiar sense of humour by the high authorities concerned. For it was at Brest-Litovsk that, early in 1918, the newly Bolshevized Russia withdrew from the Great War by signing a separate peace with Germany, thereby enabling the latter not only to replenish her vanishing stocks of food and raw materials, but to release large numbers of her troops for the last desperate assault upon the Franco-British lines.

Omitting, so far as can be ascertained, any public reference to this past chapter in their common history, the representatives of the Reich laid the basis of the impending negotiations by formally handing over the town fortress to their new Soviet friends, who with equal punctilio acknowledged receipt of same. This pleasant little ceremony was watched, expressive words of an impartial eye-witness, "by a large but silent

the full implications of Russia's invasion of Poland were necessarily obscure at this stage, and variously interpreted by neutral on-; it was clear that one of her aims was to safeguard her own interests by discouraging Germany from becoming too ambitious in her movements towards the east. To that end Poland was about to be "partitioned" for the fourth time in her history ; and to the task of dismembering still-breathing—and, in places, still-kicking—carcase Herr Hitler and his associates now addressed themselves under the eyes of an interested

That there should be no misunderstanding of its attitude towards this new development, the British Government, on September 18th, issued an official statement to the effect that the Soviet attack upon Poland—"an attack made upon our Ally at a moment when she is prostrate in the face of overwhelming forces brought against her by Germany"—could not affect Britain's determination to fulfil her obligations towards the Poles and "to prosecute the war with all energy until her objects have been achieved."

On the following day, the irrepressible Mayor of Warsaw broadcast an appeal to the civilized world, in which he said :

" These Polish men, women, and children are not dying in vain ; they are dying not only for the freedom of their country, but for the freedom of Europe. We know that our friends want to help us, and will help us. Our lives may be in danger now, but our souls are undisturbed."

Herr Hitler himself was not present at the meeting between his Army and that of the Soviet, for he had an appointment to make a triumphal entry into Danzig on September 19th. Inevitably, the Führer seized the opportunity to deliver one of those impassioned monologues to which he was so addicted. In the course of a seventy-five minutes' oration, endured by his audience with every symptom of enthusiasm, he reminded the world that he was essentially a man of peace and that he had no war aims against Britain and France, but that even his exceptional patience was not inexhaustible. He hinted, further, that if the Allies persisted in a war which they had so rashly started by encouraging Poland to resist, Germany might feel compelled to use " a weapon which is not yet known and with which we ourselves could not be attacked."

Britain's reply to this characteristic outburst was prompt and unequivocal. In the House of Commons on the following day Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that Herr Hitler's account of recent events was not wholly trustworthy, and that his assurances as to the future were of the kind that he had previously repudiated whenever it suited his purpose. Undaunted by the prospect of meeting a horrid end through the agency of mysterious weapons, the Premier added that no threat would divert Britain or her Allies from their purpose of delivering Europe from the perpetual fear of German aggression.

The effect of this forthright and decisive statement upon Herr Hitler and his satellites can only be conjectured, for the latter were now confronted with another matter demanding their immediate attention.

This was nothing less than a sudden uprising in the Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia, once part of Czecho-Slovakia, but now included in what was whimsically described as a "German Protectorate."

This revolt had actually sprung into life on the previous Sunday, heralded by Labour demonstrations in Prague, and by the evening of that day had developed into a series of clashes between the civil population and the Nazi authorities, the latter being chiefly represented by Storm Troops. Apart from these and subsequent disturbances in Czecho-Slovakia's former capital, between Sunday and the following Tuesday, the 19th—the day of Herr Hitler's Danzig performance—the rioting spread as far as Brno in Moravia, and to Pilsen, Pisek, Tabor, and several other towns in Bohemia.

On the latter day the insurrectionist movement infected nominally independent Slovakia, where the native garrisons of Ruzemberok, Zilnia, and Trencin rose against the Nazis, compelling the latter to round up and disarm several thousands of Slovak troops. For the Germans, once they realized that they were faced with a more or less organized rebellion, and not merely a series of sporadic outbreaks, took their customary ruthless measures to suppress it. In certain centres, even, martial law was proclaimed—among other places, in the town of Zlin, in Moravia, a community of some 20,000 souls existing by favour, and on behalf, of M. Bata, the celebrated Shoe King.

In Bohemia the Nazi Storm Troops, finding the task of stamping out the flames too heavy a responsibility, called the military to their aid. At the same time, the police embarked on their favourite policy of wholesale arrests, on the principle that among the many innocent thus apprehended there might conceivably be a few of the guilty. In this way, such diverse personalities as the Mayor and Chief Constable of Prague, the Abbot of Strahov Monastery, and several leading Parliamentarians were among the hundreds taken into custody.

By these and similar strong-arm methods the Nazi authorities succeeded—while the "Press Officer of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia" was rather prematurely informing neutral correspondents that "absolute calm prevailed throughout the Protectorate"—in breaking the back of the revolt; and by the end of the week the insurgents were more or less under control, though rioting and isolated acts of sabotage continued to occur here and there.

Had this rebellion been staged later in the year and followed a more definite plan, it might well have materially affected the course of the war.

As it was, it served chiefly to show the Germans—and the outside world—that even within the boundaries of the Reich there were disturbing elements, and that a recurrence of the trouble at some time in the future was a possibility not to be ignored.

In Poland, meanwhile, the Russian and German forces were busily establishing contact—and presumably friendly relations—all along their common line, and mopping-up small bodies of Polish troops who, retreating from the Germans in the west, had found themselves trapped by the Russians advancing from the east. Pending further arrangements, the line of demarcation between the Nazi and Soviet Armies ran, at this date, roughly from Bialystok in the north to the Roumanian border near Stryj.

On the Russian side of this line there was considerable activity, not all of it of a martial nature. Ever a firm believer in the power of propaganda—and possibly doubting the Poles' ability to realize that what they were now suffering was entirely for their own good—the Soviet Government detailed a second, smaller but almost equally deadly expeditionary force to follow their fighting troops.

This auxiliary army was recruited chiefly from journalists, printers, actors, typesetters, producers, cinema-operators, and other servants of the Arts, to the number of about 3,000 in all. It was the duty of these exponents of the spoken and written word to impress upon the Polish people the manifold virtues and benefits of life under Soviet rule; and to that end they were armed with a million portraits of M. Stalin (the tendency of Dictators to be slightly over-generous with their photographs is a psychological point of some interest), thousands of copies of Russian newspapers, and an ample supply of films dealing with the beauties of existence under the sign of the hammer and the sickle. Following closely in the wake of the Red Army, these earnest propagandists were soon hard at work, distributing photographs, organizing concerts and topical film-shows, and setting up newspapers, pamphlets, and other advertising matter in the Polish tongue.

A rather grim accompaniment to this proselytising campaign was the systematic hunting-down and shooting (or "liquidation," as it was euphemistically termed) of the official classes, the big landowners, and the middle-class element in the occupied areas. Thus the inhabitants of eastern Poland were enabled to appreciate simultaneously the blessings accruing to the faithful from the Soviet régime and its disadvantages for those who failed to see eye to eye with it.

While the world awaited the outcome of the Russo-German conversations at Brest-Litovsk, the work of crushing the remainder of the Polish Army was pursued with unflagging zeal. Even the German official communiqué was constrained to admit that the fighting was not yet ended and that "the destruction or capture of the scattered remnants of the former Polish Army" was still going on. Indeed, to the Germans, who had so repeatedly announced her demise, Poland must have seemed an unconscionable time a-dying, notwithstanding the speed with which she had been overrun. In the vast area now occupied by the Russians there was comparative peace, but in Germany's newly acquired *lebensraum* there still remained certain defiant outposts to be subdued.

Warsaw, that indomitable city, continued to resist, even to the extent—on September 20th—of counter-attacking the enemy in the eastern suburbs and of taking a number of prisoners. The garrisons of Modlin and the Hel peninsula had not yet been persuaded to see reason. Lwow, which had been variously reported to have been captured by (a) the Russians and (b) the Germans, was also holding out; and the fierce fighting that had broken out a week before near Kutno between a few doughty detachments of the Polish Army and a greatly superior force of Germans was still raging.

While these minor annoyances were being dealt with, the occupation of the country by the Nazi and Soviet forces proceeded according to plan: a plan that involved the withdrawal of the Germans from certain towns, such as Bialystok, and some discussion as to the future ownership of certain others, such as the covetable but intractable Lwow. By September 20th Russia had regained, at a negligible cost, most of the territory she had been forced to cede to Germany under the peace terms dictated by the latter in 1918 at Brest-Litovsk.

In the rapidly narrowing strip of country between the German and Russian Armies, thousands of Poles to whom the prospect of life under the Soviet or the Nazi régime made no appeal were leaving their homes and making what speed they could towards the Roumanian frontier, hoping to reach it before it was closed against them by their enemies. To Roumania, who had no wish to become entangled in diplomatic complications with either Germany or Russia, this influx of refugees was a source of some embarrassment, the more so as it included several thousand Polish soldiers, a hundred fighting aircraft, and a quantity of tanks and other war material. Under the direction of the Roumanian Minister of Police, internment camps were hurriedly erected along the border for the

accommodation of these homeless, impoverished, and exhausted victims of a war they had neither desired nor deserved.

On September 20th it was announced by the German High Command that those troops who had advanced beyond the line Stryj-Lwow-Brest-Litovsk would be withdrawn to a final line of demarcation to be determined by the German and Russian authorities. Later in the same day General von Brauchitsch, the Nazi Commander-in-Chief, was inspired to proclaim "the end of military operations against Poland" and "the extermination of the remnants of the Polish Army." Undismayed by this official intimation that they no longer existed, remnants of the Polish Army continued their heroic struggle around Warsaw, at Modlin, and elsewhere.

Meanwhile the Red Army, thrusting forward its motorized columns in some places at the rate of thirty or forty miles a day, had now occupied as much of eastern Poland as its leaders considered desirable for the moment. In less than a week, so sudden had been its onset and so feeble the resistance encountered, this enormous force had advanced, on an average, 150 miles from its own frontier along a 500-600-mile front. Thus the Russians had now gained possession, with almost ridiculous ease and at an infinitesimal cost, of numerous strategic points and key-towns that were likely to prove very useful to them in future negotiations with the Reich.

Although the Soviet invasion of Poland was probably no surprise to Germany, it must have irked the latter somewhat to know that in one week, and at immeasurably less expense, Russia had achieved as much as she herself had accomplished in three. Nor was that all, for the fact that the entire Polish-Roumanian frontier was now held by Russian troops meant that any plan Germany might have entertained of obtaining wheat and oil from Roumania must remain in abeyance, at least for the time being. The further fact that neither the Soviet official broadcasts nor the equally official Moscow Press had seen fit to make any reference whatever to Herr Hitler's Danzig speech may or may not have seemed significant to the Nazi leaders.

Although the Russians now commanded the Roumanian border at all points, they had given an undertaking to respect Roumanian neutrality; and on September 20th the frontier was reopened to those who wished to cross it in either direction. The great majority of Polish refugees entered Roumania by way of Zaleszczyki and Sniatyn, where the frontiers of Poland, Russia, and Roumania converge. Through these quiet little

border towns poured an unceasing torrent of strangely assorted vehicles—private cars, lorries, motor-buses, dog-carts, even fire-engines—and an endless stream of pedestrians of all ages, staggering to the internment camps under the burden of such few poor chattels as they had been able to bring with them. And it was while this flood of emigrants was at its height that the Germans chose to honour Zaleszczyki with its first air raid of the war, sending eighteen heavy bombers to remind the fleeing thousands that Poland's offences against the Reich were not yet fully expiated.

On September 21st, Roumania, already feeling slightly uneasy in her ringside-seat at this war-dance of the nations, was drawn even closer to it by the murder of her Prime Minister, M. Calinescu. This crime was the work of the Iron Guard, an anti-Jewish, conspiratorial, totalitarian organization modelled on Nazi lines and known to be in close touch with the official Nazi party.

This having been established beyond all doubt, the German official wireless had no hesitation in announcing that the assassination was "an act of British villainy," and that "only Great Britain was interested in this bloody crime." A little later, hedging slightly, it amended this accusation to include Poland, whose representatives were alleged to have conspired with "British agents" with the object of "compromising the good relations between Germany and Roumania."

There were those, however, who remained unconvinced by this rather tortuous reasoning, and who took the view that the murder might conceivably have been inspired by Germany's annoyance at the fact that the Polish-Roumanian frontier was now under Russian control. In support of this theory it was pointed out that, prior to Russia's appearance on the scene, the Nazi Air Force had markedly refrained from bombing one obvious military objective—the Lwow-Sniatyn railway-line, very useful to anybody wishing to transport supplies from Roumania to Germany and the occupied parts of Poland.

While these events were occurring at the southern end of their front, the Russian forces in the north were consolidating their position along the Lithuanian border. In general, the Lithuanians were amiably disposed towards the Soviet, if only because they hoped for the latter's aid in regaining Vilna, which they still regarded as their rightful capital. By agreement with Russia, their common frontier had now been closed to refugees, but not before some 15,000 Polish troops had crossed it, to be disarmed and interned.

From Vilna south-west to Grodno and Bialystok the railway was now

in the hands of the Soviet ; and it was commonly believed that the German and Russian authorities had agreed to a line of demarcation that would leave Vilna, Grodno, Bialystok, Brest-Litovsk, and Lwow under Soviet control : an arrangement whereby Russia would gain an addition to her population of 11,000,000 Ukrainians and a position astride Germany's path to the Balkans.

It was to settle the final details of this carving-up of Poland that a German military mission had now arrived in Moscow. Meanwhile, a Red Army communiqué issued on September 20th claimed that Russian troops had disarmed three Polish infantry divisions, two cavalry brigades, and many smaller detachments, and that in all 60,000 prisoners had been taken, with 280 guns and 120 aeroplanes. In the operations resulting in these triumphs, the tanks of the Red Army played a conspicuous part, working to a formula—first the small, then the medium, and finally the large tanks—which enabled the second and third lines to cover the advance of their predecessors.

As for the Army of the Reich, this was still busily engaged in rounding up and liquidating those sections of the Polish forces which still persisted, in defiance of the laws of reason and good sense, in carrying on a war which—if they were ever privileged to hear a German official broadcast—they must have known they had lost long ago.

The name of Warsaw, in particular, bade fair to become engraved on the hearts of the German High Command, for that gallant city, reduced now to a ruined skeleton of its former lovely self, still defied the enemy to come and take it. Street-fighting was now a daily feature of life in the outer suburbs ; bombs fell upon it ceaselessly, pounding the wreckage of its finest buildings to even more pitiable ruins and starting fires that the defenders had no means to extinguish ; shells screamed down upon it, day and night, as if the besiegers sought to blast Poland's capital from its very foundations.

Yet the city fought on, the ranks of its garrison being more than once reinforced by small bodies of Polish troops who cut their way through the encircling ring of Germans. Thus, on September 21st, the survivors of three brigades of Polish cavalry broke through the enemy lines and joined in the defence of the city. On that day, too, no fewer than seven Nazi aircraft were shot down by the defenders.

It was obvious, however, that this heroic story could have no ending : an ending that now could not be very long delay salient south-west of Warsaw, in the neighbourhood of Tom

Zamosc, the remainder of Poland's southern army had been fighting valiantly for days. The success of her operations elsewhere and the speed of her advance through Southern Poland enabled Germany to detail a large section of her Silesian army to deal with this last stumbling-block in her all-conquering path. These reinforcements, taking the Poles in the rear, penetrated deeply into their makeshift lines of communication and cut off their retreat. There followed, in the vicinity of Ozorkow, four days of terrific fighting, described by the German official news-agency as "worthy to rank as one of the most heroic episodes in the history of the German Army." More and more German troops arrived to join in the battle, while the numbers of the Poles rapidly decreased. Finally the latter, forced into a narrow space in which they had no room to manoeuvre, found themselves with no choice but to lay down their arms.

In this battle, the Germans (whose liking for round figures was a noticeable feature of their communiqués) claimed to have taken 60,000 prisoners and 130 guns. Their own losses were not disclosed, nor, owing to the elaborate precautions taken by the Nazi War Office to conceal their casualties from the German public, was it possible at this stage to do more than estimate them roughly. One such estimate, put forward by a reliable French authority, suggested that in these first three weeks of the campaign Germany had lost 150,000 killed and wounded, 400 to 600 aeroplanes, and between 600 and 700 pilots.

This action was the last of any importance to be fought by the armies in the field. At the end of this third week, however, the garrisons of Warsaw, Lwow, Modlin, and the Hel peninsula were still fighting their separate battles with the enemy at their gates. South of Lwow, the Nazi forces that had previously reached Stanislawow had now fallen back in the direction of Stryj. Stanislawow itself was taken over by the advance-guard of the Red Army, who were reported to have informed the slightly puzzled inhabitants that they had come "to beat back the Germans." It was presumably in reference to this change-over that the German official communiqué remarked tersely: "The German troops fighting near Lwow have been relieved by Russian units."

Meanwhile, in that part of Eastern Poland now controlled by the Soviet, the latter had lost no time in imposing its régime upon the people and replacing the local authorities by others of its own choosing. A typical example of these methods was furnished by the town of Barczevo, near the Russian border, where the existing town council was dismissed and superseded by a committee consisting of two landless peasants, a

carpenter, and a general labourer, whose first duty was to make an inventory of the property of the local landlords and divide it among the peasantry of the district.

Of the landowners in the occupied area thus summarily dispossessed, a large number were arrested and held for subsequent "liquidation," while others took to the woods and marshes in the hope of eluding the Soviet search-parties detailed to run them down. A few managed to escape across the frontier into Lithuania and Roumania ; but the majority encountered a less happy fate.

A minor problem that had to be dealt with by the Nazis at this time was a renewed outbreak of guerrilla fighting in South-west Poland, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Czystochowa, one of the first towns to be overrun by the invaders nearly three weeks before.

The rapidity of the Germans' advance in those early days had left them no time to establish a complete military occupation of this area, which now afforded a temporary refuge to small parties of Polish troops who had been cut off from the main body of their Army and left to fend for themselves. Lying hidden about the countryside by day, and emerging at night to obtain what little food their civilian compatriots could spare them, these groups of desperate men continually harassed the enemy's rearguard, laying ambushes for German working-parties, sniping here a soldier and there a policeman, and vanishing into the woods again before they could be surrounded and brought to book.

Around Warsaw, too, the fighting still went on. After weeks of bombing, shelling, and street-fighting, the struggle for the capital suddenly took on a new intensity, and on September 22nd the Poles actually succeeded in driving the enemy back at several points on a front of twenty miles. Even the German communiqué was moved to admit that there had been "heavy fighting with desperately resisting Polish forces between Modlin and Warsaw." It was during this action that General Baron von Fritsch, former Commander-in-Chief of the German Army and one of the old guard of Germany's military leaders, met his death in somewhat mysterious circumstances.

On the 22nd, Herr Hitler, accompanied by General Goering, visited the Polish front ; and the arrival of these notabilities coincided with yet another defiant broadcast by the Mayor of Warsaw, in which that gallant gentleman referred scathingly to "the wanton slaughter of civilians" and "the intentional destruction of historic buildings" which formed part of the Nazi methods of war.

On the following day the said methods at last brought about the fall of Lwow, which, like Warsaw, had been stoutly resisting continuous attacks from all sides for the better part of three weeks. The taking of this stubborn town afforded great satisfaction to the enemy ; but the price exacted by the defenders had been very heavy.

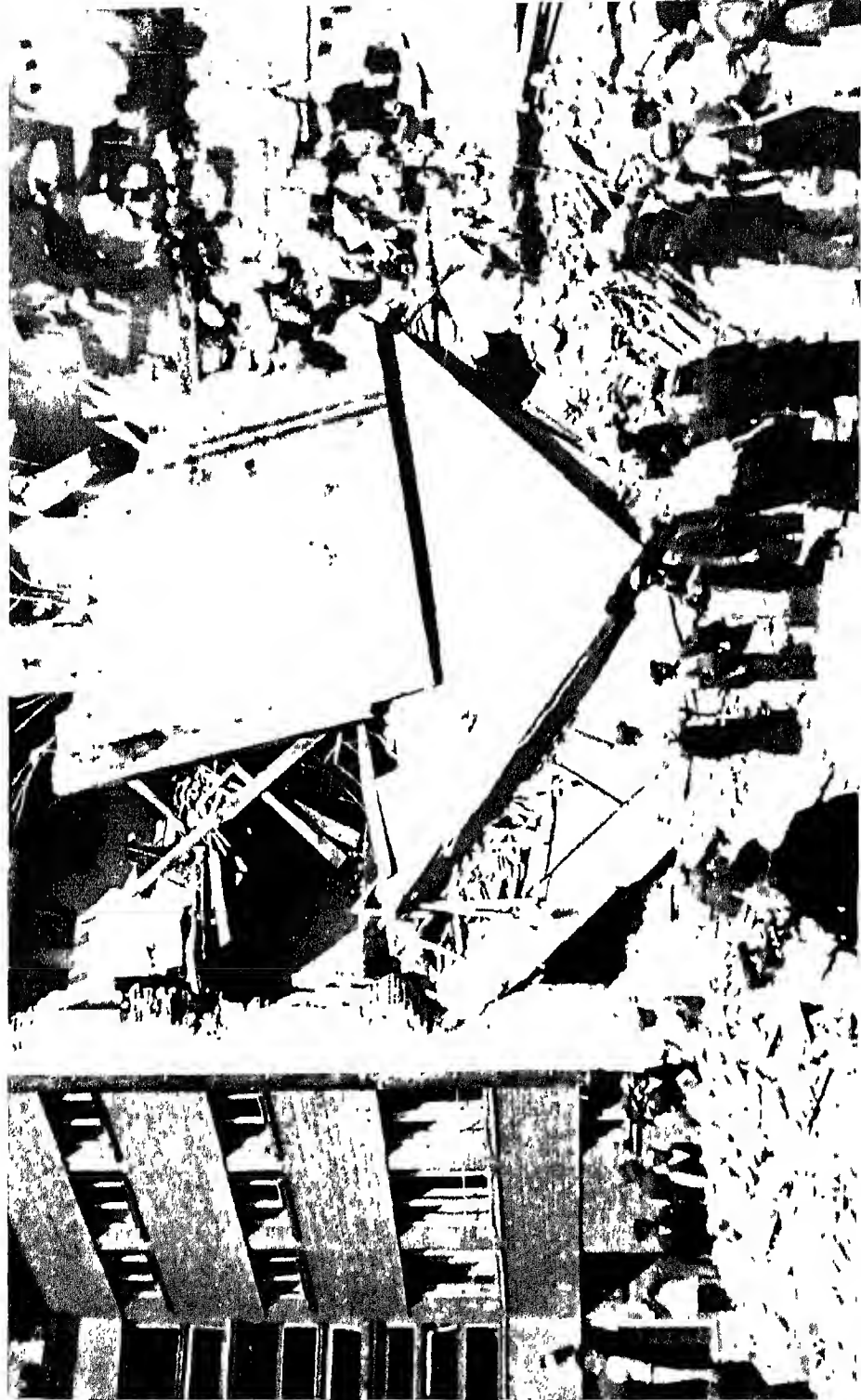
It was perhaps as a gesture of welcome to the Führer that, on September 23rd and 24th, the German artillery subjected Warsaw to the most savage bombardment yet experienced by that unfortunate city. For twenty-four hours without a pause, more than 150 guns hurled shells into the town, while aircraft bombed and bombed again the crowded central districts. As a result of this ruthless battering, fires broke out at more than a hundred points about the city ; and so badly damaged was the town's water-supply and so great the danger from splinters and flying debris that the inhabitants could do little to check these conflagrations.

In attempting to justify these tactics, the German High Command declared that " battle operations against the Polish capital " had been resumed because " all efforts to convince the Warsaw commander of the futility of resistance had failed." (Equally unconvinced, apparently, were the Poles defending Modlin, and the little garrison of the Hel peninsula. In the latter place the drama of the Westerplatte was still being re-enacted by a handful of heroes who had been withstanding incessant attacks by land, sea, and air ever since the fall of Gdynia.)

But there is a limit even to such incredible courage and endurance as that shown by the defenders of Warsaw. After twenty days of the fiercest fighting, more than half the city lay in ruins ; its waterworks, electricity-plants, and other utility services had been put out of action ; its ammunition was exhausted ; fires were raging everywhere in the quarters that still stood ; and there was a grave risk of pestilential epidemics, owing to the scarcity of water and the destruction of the majority of the hospitals.

In these circumstances the city authorities reluctantly decided that they could no longer continue the struggle ; and on September 27th they proposed an armistice for the discussion of conditions of capitulation. Not unnaturally affected by this decision, the fortress of Modlin unwillingly laid down its arms on the following day ; and forty-eight hours later the last outpost of organized defence in Poland—the fort on the peninsula of Hel—followed suit.

On October 1st the German Army began its triumphal entry into the capital—lavishly beflagged with Nazi banners by Herr Hitler's express



THE DESTRUCTION OF WARSAW

THE VICTIMS OF AGGRESSION SURVEY THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CAPITAL. THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN SOON AFTER THE NAZI BOMBERS HAD PASSED OVERHEAD

order—and by the end of the week the enemy was in full occupation of the city which had defied it for so long. It was agreed between victors and vanquished that the Polish troops who had formed part of the garrison should not be treated as prisoners of war, but merely disarmed and dismissed to their homes ; but this agreement was subsequently broken by the Germans as and when it suited them to do so.

With the fall of the capital, the Polish-German War came virtually to an end. True, the Army of the Reich, though it had accomplished its main task in a brisk and workmanlike manner, was not yet in a position to sit back and rest upon its laurels. The precise intentions of the Red Army in the east were yet to be ascertained ; the conquered territory had to be disciplined and reorganized in accordance with Nazi ideals ; and there remained many scattered remnants of the Polish Army to be rounded up, disarmed, and dispatched to whatever fate their captors considered fitting.

But these, when all was said, were relatively minor considerations, such as are bound to arise at the conclusion of any campaign. To all intents and purposes, the war was over ; in less than a month the *blitzkrieg* policy had fully justified itself. All that remained now, for the victors, was to tidy up the arena and to apportion the spoils ; for the vanquished, to face the uncertain future with what courage they could muster ; and for the neutral onlookers, to analyse the causes that had brought success so swiftly to the Nazi banner.

These causes were not far to seek. Germany's invasion of Poland was due to no sudden impulse, but to a long-cherished plan of which every detail had been carefully thought out, and in which the element of surprise played an essential part. Though the writing on the wall had long been apparent to Poland, the latter was allowed no time to perfect her defences before the enemy was upon her. By attacking without the customary courtesy of a declaration of war, and on a wide and comprehensive scale, Germany gained an initial advantage that added impetus to her advance and carried her through all opposition as a reaping-machine is driven through a field of corn.

The Nazi High Command, moreover, made use of a new technique, suggested and made possible by the immense development of aerial fighting during the past decade. In the Great War aeroplanes were used almost exclusively for reconnaissance work and artillery observation ; in Poland they were employed also as an integral factor in infantry attacks.

This plan of action—tried out by the Italians in Abyssinia, and by the

Germans themselves in Spain—was as simple as it was, in the right circumstances, effective. It called for close co-operation between the invader's aircraft and the motorized columns, the former going ahead to paralyze the Poles' lines of communication and disorganize their reserves, and the latter following up at speed to consolidate the ground gained before the defenders could collect themselves to launch a counter-attack.

It was immensely to Germany's advantage that the open character of the country over which her troops advanced, the dry weather which marked the start of the campaign, and the numerical inferiority of the Polish forces all lent themselves admirably to these tactics, the success of which depended, obviously, on the closest understanding between her air-arm and her ground forces. On one occasion at least when this understanding failed and the German mechanized units were left to fight their own battle without any assistance from the air, the Poles succeeded in knocking out nearly a hundred tanks and inflicting heavy losses on the following infantry.

At this stage of the war it remained to be seen whether Germany would see fit to employ the same methods on the Western Front, if and when she chose to exert herself in that direction. Apart from the obstacle presented by the Maginot Line, the hill-country of Northern France does not offer the same facilities for shock-tactics as do the level Polish plains. Moreover, in the matter of anti-tank guns and anti-aircraft devices the Allies were vastly better equipped than the Poles. More important still, Germany could not hope to gain an early advantage in the West by "beating the pistol" and hurling her full weight against an enemy ill-prepared to meet her.

But this was a matter to be decided by the future. In the meantime, there was the final cleaning-up of Poland still to do. On October 5th, Herr Hitler flew to Warsaw and there reviewed his all-conquering troops at a parade intended to mark the official end of his Polish enterprise. Having toured the wrecked city and approved the handiwork of his artillery and aircraft, the Führer officiated at a march-past of selected units and afterwards distributed Iron Crosses with a generous hand. Heartened by this experience, he returned to Berlin, and in the Reichstag on October 6th delivered a speech which consisted partly of a slightly biased survey of the events of the past few weeks, and partly of what he described as "a few more proposals for peace." Outside Germany, however, these proposals were received with no great enthusiasm, the

British Government describing them as "vague and obscure, and containing no suggestion of reparation for the wrongs done by Germany to other peoples."

These sentiments were doubtless shared by the unhappy Poles, who were now in process of being brought to order by their new masters. Hard on the heels of the victorious German Army came a swarm of agents of the Gestapo, who lost no time in getting to work in accordance with the best traditions of their Corps. In Warsaw, where the people were now facing famine and disease as a result of the breakdown of the public services, wholesale and presumably authorized looting by representatives of the Nazi régime became the order of the day. Valuable furniture, paintings, and bric-à-brac were seized and sent into Germany; closed shops were broken open and their contents similarly disposed of; fuel, textiles, and metals of all sorts—even door-handles and kitchen utensils—were commandeered in the name of the Führer. All cameras and pictures showing the effects of the German bombardment were confiscated; thousands of radio sets were impounded, and the public were strictly forbidden to listen to foreign broadcasts.

Supplied by their spies with lists of the names of Poles who had distinguished themselves in the defence of their country, the Gestapo worked night and day to round up these enemies of the Reich. In the first few days of the German occupation of the city hundreds of Warsaw's leading citizens vanished from the public eye with sinister suddenness. Among these was M. Starzynski, the formidable Mayor, whose suicide was at first rumoured and then officially denied, and whose ultimate fate remained a mystery.

As for the Jews, many of whom were refugees from Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, and Austria, the hand of persecution descended heavily upon them; only specialists whose technical skill was likely to be useful to the Reich were spared, and then only on the condition that they returned at once to Germany.

All in all, the Polish Government now being re-formed in Paris, with the help and encouragement of the French and British Foreign Offices, had more than enough to occupy its thoughts and energies. But it may have been some slight consolation to the leaders of that unfortunate country to know that the losses incurred by the German Army during the campaign were considerably greater than the 10,000 killed and 30,000 wounded mentioned by Herr Hitler in the course of a subsequent Reichstag speech. A more likely estimate, from a more reliable source, was 91,000 killed and

150,000 wounded, in addition to 190 tanks destroyed and some 300 aircraft lost.

In the second week of October those neutral diplomats who had left Warsaw during the siege returned to the capital to wind up their affairs and close their Embassies and Legations—and, incidentally, to discover that the buildings which had formerly housed the envoys of Great Britain, France, the United States, and Hungary no longer existed. They found the stricken city in a sorry way, with its water-supply still out of action, typhoid and cholera making their presence felt, and 80,000 wounded and injured being tended in emergency hospitals.

They found also a rumour current locally to the effect that General von Fritsch, whose reported death in action had so much surprised the world, had not perished in battle, as had been officially announced, but had been assassinated by members of Herr Himmler's Black Guards for daring to criticize the Führer's war aims and general policy.

But although Poland had sustained a blow from which she would find it hard to recover, the spirit of the nation remained unbroken. Within a fortnight of the fall of Warsaw, the new Polish Government set about the formation of a second Polish Army whose services should be at the disposal of the Allies; and to the standard of this new force, rising phoenix-like from the scattered ashes of the old, flocked a vast number of exiles who asked nothing better than a chance to strike another blow for democracy. In the new world, too, the spirit of Polish unity survived, for on October 11th no fewer than 100,000 Poles and Polish-Americans took part in a parade held in New York to celebrate the Memorial Day of General Pulaski, the Polish hero of the American War of Independence.

Meanwhile, in that part of Eastern Poland now occupied by the Soviet, the life of the people was being reorganized by methods very similar to, and no less drastic than, those employed by Germany in the west. Like their fellow-artists of the Gestapo, the agents of the OGPU swarmed over the invaded territory, listening, threatening, denouncing, and arresting. Thousands of landowners and others who were known or suspected to be unsympathetic towards the Soviet régime were taken and executed without the formality of a trial; hundreds of priests were seized and put to death. Among the latter was the aged Count Szeptycki, Metropolitan of the Uniat Church in Poland and the political and spiritual leader of the Polish Ukrainians. This venerable prelate was arrested when the Red Army entered Lwow, and—though he was in his seventy-fifth year, and paralysed—had been kept in prison ever since. In Lwow, also, a

number of Polish officers, including a relative of the late Marshal Pilsudski, were arrested on a charge of "counter-revolution" and awarded the customary punishment for that crime. In general, Polish officers and members of the upper classes in the provinces annexed by Russia all met the fate reserved for *franc-tireurs*, "class-enemies," and similar critics of the Republic. Those who did not lose their lives were fortunate to lose only their estates, for by a decree of "the National Assembly of the Western Ukraine," all land belonging to former Polish landlords and officials, as well as that owned by monasteries, was confiscated by the Soviet.

In Western Poland the removal of the native population from the new German provinces of Poznan and West Prussia had already begun, the place of these exiles being taken by Germans imported from the Baltic States. No kind of compensation was offered by the Nazi Government to the Poles thus summarily expatriated; this was considered a matter for the consideration of any puppet Polish Government that might later be set up by the Reich. As a minor move in this game of compulsory "General Post," members of the German minority in the Sovietized half of Poland were "repatriated" to the northern part of the former Polish Corridor.

As an example of the thoroughness with which this "Germanization" of the conquered territory was carried out, the town of Gdynia found itself rechristened "Gotenhafen," its principal streets renamed (to include a "Hitler-strasse" and a "Skagerrak-strasse"), its police replaced by Nazi officials from Berlin, and a new Burgomaster summoned from Hamburg to take charge of all. To cleanse the city of all remaining Polish-Jewish taint, troops of women were brought from Zoppot "to scour the town in true German fashion" and prepare it for the influx of Baltic Germans who were to form its new population.

The detailed character of such arrangements, and Herr Hitler's announcement on October 21st that certain Polish districts were to be handed over to Slovakia, suggested that the Russo-German plans for the dismemberment and resettlement of the country were more or less complete, and had been worked out some time before the double invasion had achieved its purpose.

Further evidence to this effect was provided by a semi-official announcement from Berlin concerning Germany's new eastern boundary. This, it appeared, was to run from the East Prussian frontier near Mlava, passing between Lowicz and Kutno, to join the old 1914 German frontier near Czestochowa. This would bring within the boundaries of the Reich

such important towns as Grudziadz, Bydgoszcz, Torun, Kutno, Lodz—the heart and centre of Poland's textile industry—Katowice, Sosnowice, and Konigshutte. Dr. Frank, Reich Minister without Portfolio, was named as the probable Governor of the occupied territory, with Dr. Seyss-Inquart, who had played so prominent a part in the annexation of Austria, as his deputy. As for the eastern boundary of the new shrunken Poland, this was presumably to be the line across which the Russian and German forces were now facing each other. At the same time, plans were stated to be well in hand for the establishment of a huge Jewish "reservation" near Lublin, where from 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 non-Aryans were to be segregated in a tract of country notably ill-adapted to such colonizing experiments. It was generally felt, however, that these final steps towards the establishment of a vassal Polish State would not be taken until the Army of Occupation had disciplined the country sufficiently to obviate all danger of uprising and revolt.

As yet this task had by no means been completed. Although the Polish Army had ceased to exist as a fighting entity, many thousands of its former members were still at large and doing their best to harass and hinder the invaders. It was calculated, indeed, that not far short of half a million Polish soldiers had escaped the general "round-up," and were in hiding here and there about the countryside. Guerrilla fighting was still in progress in remote corners of the country; and as late as November 10th, the *Voelkischer Beobachter*, the official Nazi newspaper, reported that great difficulties were being encountered in the work of "smoking out the Polish murdering bands from their bolt-holes." The police and S.S. men entrusted with this work suffered a large number of casualties as a result of the small-scale war waged against them by desperate men who had nothing to lose and who preferred to fight to the end.

It was possibly with the object of convincing these rebels of the error of their ways that towards the end of November Dr. Goebbels, following the example of his "opposite number" in Moscow, assembled a formidable troupe of writers, journalists, and even poets, and dispatched it on an extensive tour of the conquered provinces, with orders to spread the light and inculcate in the natives an abiding respect for Nazi ways of thought. About this time, too, the first issue of the *Warschauer Zeitung* dawned upon a surprised and interested public. In Dr. Goebbels's own words, the function of this journal—the official Nazi organ for the occupied districts—was "to act as the messenger of the political will and cultural mission of the German nation in the east."

While the sorely tried inhabitants of what had formerly been Poland were thus being educated, partly in German and partly in Russian, by the sword, the pen, the printing press, and the concentration camp, those of their compatriots who had escaped into France and elsewhere were working diligently in their country's cause. In London, General Sikorski, the new Polish Prime Minister, was conferring with the British Government and making plans for the reconstitution of the Polish Army. Both in France and in England his fellow-countrymen were enrolling in their thousands in the newly formed Polish Legions. In France alone, 80,000 Polish soldiers, with 5,000 officers and N.C.O.s, enlisted before the end of November ; and it was expected that the first divisions of this new army would be in the field by the following March or April. In Canada, several Polish divisions, destined to be added to the Canadian forces, were rapidly approaching their full strength ; while General Haller, the leader of the Polish Workers' Party, was heading a mission to America to appeal for support to the huge Polish element in that country.

Such was the state of Poland at the end of the third month of the war. With her lands at the mercy of her enemies, her cities in ruins, and her people hunted and driven from their homes, her national pride burned as strongly as ever. And nowhere did Germany's propagandists err more profoundly than in their attempts to show that the Poles were fruitlessly sacrificed by their Allies, and that the efforts of their Army were of no assistance to France and Britain. For the value and importance of Poland's contribution to the Allied cause can be quite briefly shown.

The casualties inflicted by her Army on the Germans were unquestionably far greater than the latter were willing to admit, while Germany's losses in material were considerable, and her consumption of petrol—the weakest point in her supply-system—inevitably enormous. By engaging some seventy German divisions and the bulk of the German Air Force on the Eastern Front, Poland contributed greatly to the safe transportation of the British Expeditionary Force to France, and enabled the latter country to complete her mobilization without disturbance. Furthermore, the Polish campaign furnished the Allies with much valuable information as to Germany's methods of war under the new mechanized rules. And finally, the heroic defence of Warsaw, Modlin, Lwow, and a dozen other towns gave to the world an example of rare gallantry in the most desperate circumstances.

That the part played by Poland in these first three months would serve

as an inspiration to the Allied forces in the West was not to be doubted. From the beginning of the war it had been clear that the Poles' eventual independence was destined to be established by the final victory of the Allies, rather than by the outcome of events occurring on Polish soil ; and Poland herself had brought that victory appreciably nearer by her courage in accepting and enduring the first shock of the conflict.

CHAPTER 2
THE WESTERN FRONT
SEPTEMBER 1ST—NOVEMBER 30TH

BY K. R. G. BROWNE

THE reaction of Poland's Allies to the unheralded and unjustified invasion of that unhappy country was immediate and uncompromising. Both in England and in France this crisis had long been foreseen, and the machinery designed to meet it ; and this machinery now needed only a touch to set it in motion. But although both nations were prepared for war, both strove to maintain peace until it became overwhelmingly evident that the argument of force was the only one Herr Hitler was likely to appreciate at this stage in his hitherto successful history of intimidation, bluff, and annexation.

In France, therefore, a General Mobilization Order, accompanied by a proclamation of Martial Law, was issued on September 1st. In offices, in factories, in workshops, and on farms, thousands upon thousands of men to whom the summons came as no surprise laid aside their tools, commended their families to the care of Providence, and went cheerfully forth to join the Colours—as their fathers had gone forth, to fight the same enemy, twenty-five years before.

In England, on the same day, it was announced that liability to military service was to be extended to all fit men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one. Earlier in the year Great Britain had impressed the world and shown that even her patience was not inexhaustible by departing from tradition so far as to introduce a modified form of conscription for the first occasion in her peace-time history ; and some 200,000 young Militiamen were already entering on the third month of their training.

A study of the comparative strengths of the armies engaged, and of those that seemed likely to become involved in the struggle, reveals some interesting contrasts. On paper, the German Army had a considerable numerical advantage over those of all other nations except Russia. At the outbreak of the war it consisted of ninety divisions, with a peacetime

strength of 900,000-1,000,000 men. Apart from that, as a nation accustomed to discipline and one that had lived for the past eight years under an increasingly militaristic régime, Germany had no lack of trained reserves upon whom she could call at need.

It was estimated that these second-line troops, who required but little preparation to take their places among the fighting forces, amounted to about 4,000,000 men. In addition, in the various S.S., S.A., and other Nazi units, which were run on military lines and played so large a part in the life of the nation, there were thousands of partially trained men who could be called to the Colours at short notice.

All in all, Germany's total war strength, actual and potential, at this date was probably not far short of 6,000,000 men ; though whether she had the arms and equipment to place this vast Army on a 100 per cent. war basis was rather problematical. Moreover, the rapidity with which the German Army had expanded under the stimulus of Hitlerism—from four to ninety divisions in less than five years—implied an inevitable shortage of experienced officers. For whereas men destined only to be led can be drilled into passable efficiency in a comparatively short time, the qualities of leadership needed to cope with the enormous responsibilities entailed by modern methods of war cannot be developed in a day.

There was also to be borne in mind the fact that certain members of the German High Command—survivors of the old haughty officer class that had flourished under the Hohenzollerns—did not invariably see eye to eye with Herr Hitler's adherents in the Reichstag ; which suggested that the problem of effective leadership, calling for the fullest co-operation between the Army and the State, might not prove too easy of solution.

To oppose these forces, Poland could put into the field a standing Army of some 400,000 men, capable of expansion, by the inclusion of her trained reservists and all other available man-power, to a total war strength of approximately 3,500,000. Whereas the armies of the other nations were all more or less completely mechanized, the Polish regular forces included several brigades of cavalry, the High Command believing that Poland's great open plains and marshy lowlands offered valuable opportunities for the manœuvring of horsemen.

In the matter of arms and equipment Poland was less fortunately placed than her invaders. Never a rich nation, her supplies of war material were much inferior to Germany's ; and although her troops—as was to be proved beyond question—were second to none in courage, endurance, and tenacity, they were handicapped from the start by a

shortage of tanks, heavy guns, and fighting aircraft. It was, indeed, to the far greater size of her Air Force that Germany's successes in the campaign were very largely due.

In France, a Regular Army of 700,000 men stood ready and waiting, its numbers increasing daily as the reservists hurried to join the Colours. With her system of compulsory military service tested and approved by many an emergency in the past, France could rely on having from 5,000,000 to 6,000,000 men under arms when her mobilization was complete; nor did these figures include the several additional millions to be furnished by her Colonies. The French Army was as well-equipped and efficiently mechanized as any in the world, its tanks and heavy artillery units being among the deadliest, the most up-to-date, and the most expertly handled of their kind.

Of all the nations directly concerned in the war, Great Britain normally maintained the smallest standing Army—roughly 185,000 men. For this, however, there were several reasons. In the first place, Britain was primarily a naval power, with the most efficient Fleet in the world as her first line of defence. (In this she had the advantage of Germany, whose Navy, apart from the submarine service, was only a shadow of the mighty High Seas Fleet which had fought at Jutland, Heligoland, and the Falkland Islands—and met so ignominious an end at Scapa Flow.)

In the second place, although the British Army of 1939 was only slightly larger numerically than that of 1914, it was infinitely stronger in fire-power and mobility, thanks to the introduction of mechanization and the immense developments in armaments during the past twenty years. (As evidence of the changes thus brought about, it may be noted that, whereas in 1914 nearly 60 per cent of Britain's fighting troops were infantrymen, relying on their rifles and bayonets and with two machine-guns per battalion, of the new Army only 20 per cent were infantrymen, with fifty Bren guns, a score of anti-tank rifles, and a number of other weapons to each battalion.)

And in the third place—possibly the most important factor of all—Great Britain now had a really powerful Air Force, capable not only of supporting and preparing the way for the ground forces, but of undertaking much of the work that formerly had fallen to the artillery and infantry.

Moreover, although her Regular Army might appear small by comparison with those of France and Germany, recent emergency measures—such as the doubling of the Territorial Field Army and the passing of the

National Service Act—had rendered it capable of vast and immediate expansion. The first class of Militiamen called up under the military-training scheme, which ensured an even flow of recruits at a time when they were most needed, were well ahead with their training ; and, thanks partly to the large number of trained reservists available, Britain had the best part of 1,000,000 men at the disposal of her Army on the outbreak of war.

"Never," as the Secretary for War subsequently stated in the House of Commons, "had the armed forces of the United Kingdom approached anywhere near such a total in time of peace"—a total, incidentally, that took no account of the British Army in India, the substantial forces maintained in the Near East, or the contributions of the Dominions and Colonies.

Although Russia was not, at the moment, taking an active part in this new European upheaval, her proximity to the scene of operations and the general uncertainty as to her intentions prompted considerable interest as to the size and condition of her Army. Exact figures were difficult to obtain, but it was estimated by reliable authorities that the peace-time Red Army comprised at least 100 infantry divisions and thirty cavalry divisions, with a total strength of some 2,000,000 men. In the early weeks of the war, however, new measures of mobilization were introduced by the Soviet Government, and were believed to have increased this figure to about 4,000,000.

The first step in this expansion of the Soviet forces occurred on August 31st, when Marshal Voroshiloff announced his plans for adding 500,000 men to the standing Army ; and shortly afterwards the age for the calling-up of conscripts was reduced from 19 to 17, while the summoning to the Colours of many other reserve classes was reported, though not officially confirmed.

With her almost inexhaustible resources of man-power, it was probable that the Soviet Army could attain a total war strength of 11,000,000 men in case of need. Nor, though detailed information was lacking regarding its mechanical equipment and development, was there any reason to suppose that it was inferior to other European armies in these respects.

In Great Britain, Saturday, September 2nd, was a day of suspense for the private citizen and of intense diplomatic activity for those who held his future in their hands. At 9 o'clock in the morning of Sunday, September 3rd, the British Government presented an ultimatum to Germany, demanding evidence of her willingness to withdraw her troops immediately from Poland. No reply having been received at the expira-



CHIEF OF THE IMPERIAL GENERAL STAFF
INSPECTOR GENERAL SIR EDMUND IRONSIDE



COMMANDER OF THE ARMY IN THE FIELD
GENERAL THE VISCOUNT GORT



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE HOME FORCES
GENERAL SIR WALTER KIRKE



COMMANDING THE FIRST CORPS IN FRANCE
GENERAL SIR JOHN DILL

COMMANDERS OF THE BRITISH ARMY

tion of the two-hour time-limit, it fell to the Prime Minister, at 11 a.m., to broadcast to the waiting nation the news that his last effort to sustain peace had failed, and that a state of war existed between Great Britain and Germany.

Six hours later M. Daladier spoke to the same effect for France, whose ultimatum had likewise been pointedly ignored; and the calamity which for the past twelve months had hovered over Europe was at hand.

Only twenty-five years and one month had elapsed since the life of the private citizen had been similarly disrupted, and for much the same reason; but it was in a notably different spirit from that of 1914 that Britain faced this new ordeal. The beginning of the Great War had found her ill-prepared to face the four years' struggle that followed. Then, with only a small standing Army, a few thousand Reservists, an embryo Flying Corps, and the enthusiastic but slightly despised Territorials to form the nucleus of her Expeditionary Force, she had to rely chiefly on miracles of improvisation and learn as she went along. For example—incredible though it appeared in the light of later experience—it was not until that war was nearly a year old that conscription was introduced.

Very different was her condition in September 1939. The lessons learned in the hard school of the Great War had not been forgotten. Her Army, though numerically less imposing than those of certain other nations, lacked nothing in the way of training and equipment. Her Air Force was generally acknowledged to have no superior in efficiency, either of men or of machines. The once-derided Territorials were now recognized as an integral part of the fighting Forces, capable of holding their own with the toughest Regulars. In addition to these, the first class of Militiamen—a representative cross-section of the nation's finest youth—were rapidly qualifying to take their place alongside the more experienced troops.

Moreover, the civil population was now, and had been for some months past, well on the way to being completely organized to meet any emergency. Whereas in the Great War such matters as Civil Defence and the control of the Home Front had been dealt with by hasty edicts issued as and when the need for them arose, now all the necessary measures had been worked out long ago and could be put into action at short notice. In other words, Britain's traditional policy of "Muddling-through," well enough though it had served her in the past, had now been thrown overboard. Thanks to the alarums and excursions resulting from

the Nazi extravagances of the previous few years, she now found herself—as much to her own surprise, no doubt, as to that of other nations—prepared.

The first official Allied communiqué of the war was issued two days after its declaration—on September 5th. For a document of such historic interest, it will probably strike future students of the campaign as being disappointingly short and to the point. Emanating from the French War Office, it stated simply: “On the afternoon of September 4th, land, sea, and air operations began.”

But behind this terse announcement lay a wealth of meaning. The once-famous—or infamous—Western Front was waking from its twenty-five years’ sleep. For twenty of those years the Maginot Line, that huge artificial barrier which followed the Franco-German frontier from Dunkirk to the Swiss border and represented the almost incredible realization of a French sergeant’s dream, had been building against this day. Now its vast subterranean honeycomb of strong points, batteries, barracks, and machine-gun nests was beginning to stir to life. And it is probable that its garrison was more confident—as it is certain that it was more comfortable—than its “opposite numbers,” the dwellers in the Siegfried Line, lying but a few miles away. For while the Maginot Line, in all its essential features, was finished and ready to the last round of ammunition, the Siegfried Line had not yet reached completion, and in places gave evidence—in the form of work being feverishly pushed forward by day and night—of dangerously hurried construction.

Simultaneously with the throwing down of France’s gauntlet, Britain struck her first blow. Following the enemy’s precedent, she struck by air—though not at an obscure defenceless village of no conceivable military importance. On the afternoon of September 4th, units of the Royal Air Force swooped from the sky upon the harbour of Wilhelmshaven, at the mouth of the Kiel Canal. As the defenders ran to man their anti-aircraft guns, the British planes wheeled low over the harbour, turned, and made for home, while the roar of exploding bombs, the harsh sound of rending metal, and the clouds of smoke and steam rising from one of Germany’s prized pocket-battleships showed that their visit had not been without purpose or result. Probably it would not have consoled the German Navy greatly to know that about the same time another of their biggest ships, in the neighbouring harbour of Brunsbüttel, was receiving similar attentions from the R.A.F.

The psychological effect of this shrewd stroke, delivered with such



GENERAL GAJELIN
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE FRENCH ARMY



THE LATE M. ANDRÉ MAGINOT
LATE MINISTER OF WAR
COMMANDER OF THE MAGINOT LINE

élan so soon after the outbreak of hostilities, was possibly even more valuable to Britain than the material damage it caused.

On the Western Front itself the first signs of activity became apparent on September 6th, when French troops embarked on a series of exploratory excursions into the No-Man's-Land, varying in width from three to fifteen miles, that lay between the Siegfried and the Maginot Lines, for the most part on the German side of the common frontier. This strip of territory was mainly rolling woodland country of little valleys and low hills of the sort that are insignificant in peacetime, but attain great value as vantage-points in time of war. The inhabitants of the villages that studded this narrow ribbon of land now found themselves—those, at least, who had not already been evacuated—in the somewhat uncomfortable position of a lamb between two dormant tigers.

These initial operations (in which, incidentally, the French reversed the opening procedure of the Great War by being the first to set foot in the enemy's country) were carried out chiefly in the sector between the Rhine and the Moselle. They were more or less in the nature of a reconnaissance towards Saarbrücken, capital of the great industrial province of the Saar and an important centre of the German coal and iron trades. This town, though partially protected by a loop of the Siegfried Line, lay barely two miles on the German side of the frontier, and so was peculiarly vulnerable to the French long-range guns. In these activities French tanks and aircraft co-operated for the first time under active-service conditions, and with considerable success.

In the days that followed, while the campaign in Poland marched towards its predestined end, the situation on the Franco-German front remained more or less unchanged. From both sides of the border the opposing forces made sporadic forays with small bodies of infantry, sometimes assisted by tanks, while their artillery ranged the back areas in search of lines of communication and registered on possible targets far from the actual front. On the whole, the French had the better of these exchanges, if only because every yard of their advance took them farther into German territory. In this way they succeeded in occupying the Forest of Warndt, on the direct line to Saarbrücken, and thus cutting off a salient in the line of enemy outposts before the Siegfried Line.

To the casual onlooker, with memories of the early days of the Great War, when events moved with speed and fierce engagements were of almost daily occurrence, the French operations in this area may have seemed slow and comparatively unprofitable. They were intended, how-

ever, to do no more than feel the way towards the Siegfried Line, make contact with the enemy, and clear the ground of the innumerable traps and pitfalls sown there by the Germans during the previous year. For although the Nazis professed great faith in the invulnerability of their "West Wall," they had not disdained to strew its front garden, so to speak, with delayed-action mines, concealed ditches embellished with iron stakes, camouflaged belts of wire, hidden minefields operated from a distance, and many other such devices intended to discourage trespassers.

That the methodical methods of the French and their slow but business-like movement towards Saarbrücken (whence the civilian element was already beginning to depart) and the valuable Saar Basin were making some impression on the German High Command was shown by the fact that the latter now began to transfer troops from the Polish front to strengthen the garrison of the "West Wall."

On September 12th there was issued by the British Ministry of Information an item of news that had been anxiously awaited in both England and France. Like their French colleagues, the British authorities evidently believed brevity to be the better part of discretion, for their first official communiqué ran simply: "For some days past rumours have been current in this country and abroad that British troops have landed in France. The Ministry of Information is now permitted to announce officially that this is so. The troops are not yet in action . . ."

Thus baldly were the survivors of the Old Contemptibles, Kitchener's Army, and the First Hundred Thousand notified that their sons and nephews had followed in their footsteps and gone to join their ancient Ally against their ancient enemy. As was disclosed later, the first representatives of the British Expeditionary Force to set foot in France were units of the Royal Air Force; and these were already at work in co-operation with the French Air Force, carrying out reconnaissances over Germany and photographing the Siegfried Line.

The main body of the B.E.F. followed hard upon their heels, an orderly and uninterrupted stream of men, guns, transport, and munitions. The transportation across the Channel of this great force of machines and men, in complete secrecy, without a single casualty or any serious mishap, and in so comparatively short a time, was a triumph of organization on the part of the Army, the Navy, the Merchant Service, and the railways, and one that earned the admiration of interested neutrals, and in particular that of America.

This vanguard of the British Army arrived in France to face conditions very different from those which had confronted an earlier generation in August 1914. The Old Contemptibles had been plunged immediately into battle, and thenceforward, with very little understanding of what it was all about, had marched and fought and marched again from Mons to the Marne with scarcely an hour's respite. The Army of 1939, however, could discover little evidence of war during their first days on French soil. Only the distant rumble of guns along the Maginot Line betokened any martial activity ; behind that massive bulwark France and Britain were unhurriedly assembling, checking, and putting the final touches to their resources against the day when they would be needed.

Neither the French nor the British leaders were in any hurry to join battle with the enemy. The experience gained in 1914 and the three following years now stood them in good stead. The Great War had opened as a war of movement, with marching and counter-marching, cavalry actions and running skirmishes, advances and retreats, all on the approved pattern ; only gradually had it declined into the stagnation of trench-warfare. This time, on the other hand, the opposing forces were already securely dug in and embattled, and nobody could foretell exactly how the coming struggle would develop, or how that new incalculable element, the air, would affect the course of events.

Meanwhile, the Allies were content to bide their time, knowing that every day of waiting helped them to consolidate their position and complete their preparations. Besides, the knowledge that these immense reserves of men and material were calmly and efficiently gathering behind the French frontier brought no great comfort to the German High Command, who had to tidy up the loose ends of the Polish campaign and set their military house in order before they could turn to face this new menace in the west.

Furthermore, although there had as yet been no spectacular developments on the Western Front, quite enough was occurring there—apart from the wasp-like activities of the Allied Air Forces—to give the German commanders considerable food for thought. With the object of forcing the enemy to relax their grip on Poland by withdrawing troops from their eastern front to reinforce the Rhineland defences, the French maintained their steady pressure on the Siegfried Line and their slow, purposeful advance towards the Saar Basin.

Events, in short, were developing slowly but surely according to the

Allied plan. The French advance beyond the Maginot Line, designed chiefly to become an encircling or "pincer" movement against Saarbrücken, proceeded unhurriedly, successfully, and at little cost. On the right of the line, French tanks—some of them huge seventy-ton monsters that must have appeared even more alarming to the enemy than the first "land-ironclads" had done on the memorable day of their *début* in September 1915—worked forward along the River Blies to the high land dominating Saarbrücken from the south; thus the French established "squatter's rights" to a valuable field of fire for use on future occasions. To these overtures the Germans replied with heavy artillery fire and occasional counter-attacks against the French advanced outposts.

From the increased aerial activity in this sector it was obvious that the Germans had thought it expedient to transfer a number of their machines from the Polish front. These, however, were somewhat handicapped by the fact that the aerodrome at Saarbrücken had been rendered untenable by French artillery fire and had perforce been evacuated. It was remarked that such aerial encounters as took place about this time almost invariably occurred over German territory, the Nazi airmen appearing disinclined to venture far over the French lines: an enemy idiosyncrasy which had been equally noticeable in the Great War.

On September 14th the French broke new ground by launching an attack on the extreme north of the Franco-German frontier, more or less following the line of the Moselle and the border of the little independent Duchy of Luxembourg. Dwellers on the German-Luxembourg frontier were thus granted the privilege of looking on at a war, in progress only a mile or so away, in which they were not personally involved—though many of those watching must have wondered how long, in view of Germany's attitude towards the theory and practice of neutrality, they could hope to enjoy such immunity. These misgivings were probably increased when the Nazis saw fit to blow up a bridge across the Moselle without condescending to warn the inhabitants of the Duchy (to whom at least half of the bridge belonged) by the statutory signal of three green rockets.

According to the now established custom on both sides, the French tanks led the advance, taking all obstructions in their stride with awe-inspiring ease and making smooth the path for the following infantry. Before this relentless pressure the Germans fell back, abandoning their outposts and destroying the railway-line as they went. As far away as the city of Luxembourg itself the thunder of the guns was plainly audible; and by the end of the day the French were within rifle-shot of the village

of Perl, two miles within the German border. On the following day, a German counter-attack having been beaten back, this village was occupied and the attackers pushed forward in the direction of Nennig and Neunkirchen.

It was after this action that the French War Office for the first time reported the capture of prisoners—not because none had been taken previously, but because the number collected on this occasion was considerable and indicated that the opposing Armies were becoming more closely engaged.

From the continuous and violent activity of their heavy guns it was clear that the Germans were taking the French movement in this area very seriously, and were doing their utmost to hamper it by shelling the Allies' lines of communication and likely points of assembly. Further evidence to this effect was afforded by the evacuation of civilians from Saarburg, Wellen, Trier, and other towns as far as thirty miles behind the German lines.

At this early stage of the war, however, it was no part of the French plan to engage in sensational and wasteful offensives. The Allied High Command preferred to consolidate and mop up its small but useful local gains before undertaking any attack on a large and expensive scale. As one of their military observers put it, in reply to comment on the laconic character of the French communiqués : " We are putting out feelers like a burrowing beetle, but every day the feelers are reaching farther and testing every inch of the way."

A typically Gallic description of a method which served so well that by the middle of September the whole of the French ninety-mile front between the Rhine and the Moselle had moved on to German soil ; while in the Saar sector their troops had advanced two miles along a twelve-mile front between Hornbach and Saarbrücken. The latter town, indeed, was reported on September 15th to be in danger of being almost completely surrounded. Owing to the carefully thought-out tactics employed in these operations, the French losses were comparatively slight, while the number of prisoners taken by them increased daily.

At the extreme north-western end of their front, the French pushed on with their advance through the wooded hill-country on the east bank of the Moselle. Hereabouts the most noteworthy incident of this period was a determined counter-attack by the enemy in the Sierck sector, where the two opposing lines touched the Luxembourg boundary.

This minor offensive succeeded in so far as it compelled the French to

fall back a short distance and enabled the Germans to establish themselves temporarily on French soil. Their satisfaction was short-lived, however, for within a few hours the French attacked again and drove them out. The fact that the fighting-line on the Western Front at this time was entirely in German territory was obviously a source of annoyance to the Nazi High Command, whose inclination was always to invade another, and preferably a weaker, country rather than to defend their own; and it is likely that this attack, and others delivered during the next few days, were undertaken with a view to justifying the announcement that German troops had set foot, however briefly, on the French side of the frontier.

Such episodes, however, did little to delay the French advance in this sector. By the end of the second week in September their leading troops had attained a dominating position on the crest of the Moselle Valley, while behind them the heavy artillery crawled slowly forward, shelling the German lines of communication and silencing the machine-gun nests left behind to cover the enemy's withdrawal.

During these operations the Government of the Duchy of Luxembourg was somewhat perturbed by the influx of curiosity-seekers who arrived in their thousands from Belgium, Holland, and elsewhere to view the fighting from the high ground near Schengen, in the south-east corner of the Duchy: "a practice," as the Luxembourg Government very justly pointed out, "both unseemly and dangerous," and one fraught with no little risk to the enterprising but somewhat unimaginative sightseers.

At the other end of their line, the French continued to make their way steadily forward through the difficult country about Saarbrücken—a tangle of thickly wooded hills traversed by small, deep valleys, of which the most considerable was the valley of the Blies. Saarbrücken itself was now almost completely enveloped; one-third of the mines in the Saar had passed out of the enemy's control; and there were indications that the latter's heavy artillery was beginning to move back. The French tactics in this region were an object-lesson in the theory of "infiltration"—that is, the employment of successive waves of troops, not necessarily taking the shortest route to their objective, but working gradually towards it through those areas where the resistance is weakest. Though obviously less spectacular than a direct frontal attack, this method has the advantage of conserving man-power and enabling the forward troops to keep constantly in touch with their headquarters and supplies.

The frequency with which the name of the Saar Valley appeared in

the war news was a reminder that this district had always been of great strategic importance to both Germany and France. Separating the Vosges from the Ardennes, it had seen fierce fighting between the two countries in the past. In the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the German Staff reported the country thereabouts as "unsuitable for rapid manoeuvre"—a further argument in favour of the present French policy of a slow but methodical advance. The town of Saarbrücken itself—a large and straggling community extending for more than five miles on both banks of the Saar—was no stranger to war, for through it in the past had marched every army attempting to invade France from the east.

As September drew towards its close, the French advance was here and there held up by those weather conditions for which the unfortunate Polish Army had longed in vain—low clouds and heavy rain, which impeded the work of aerial reconnaissance and hampered the movement of tanks. The artillery duel, however, continued with unabated energy on both sides, the French and German gunners concentrating chiefly on roads, railways, suspected dumps, and potential assembly-places in the back areas as much as on the Siegfried and Maginot Lines themselves. That the Siegfried Line, however, received its due share of attention was apparent from aerial photographs which showed that certain of its more hurriedly built sections had suffered badly from French shell-fire. This was probably due as much to the accuracy of the French gunners' aim as to the fact that—as many experts believed—cement containing too high a percentage of chalk had been used in its construction.

In their counter-attacks on this front the Germans employed their favourite Great War gambit—a violent artillery bombardment followed by a massed-infantry assault. The French, on the other hand, adhered to their new technique, dispensing almost entirely with preliminary shell-fire and detailing small bodies of troops to creep up, under cover of river-beds and undergrowth, until they could surround an enemy pillbox or machine-gun nest and take its garrison by surprise.

As a result of these tactics, which were almost everywhere successful, and enabled the supporting artillery to move forward slightly day by day, the French field-gunners could now look down from their advanced positions upon a great industrial area in which all work had ceased. The innumerable blast-furnaces displayed no sign of life; the complicated machinery of the mines stood idle; the pall of smoke that normally hung over Saarbrücken no longer defiled the sky. The town itself was now almost within range of the French trench-mortars, while Saarlouis,

thirteen miles to the west, went cautiously about its limited business under the very muzzles of the French guns. To the Germans the perilous position of these towns was a cause of much anxiety, for their capture would give the French command of the river-crossings and greatly facilitate the progress of their tanks and armoured columns.

The French authorities had by this time practically completed the evacuation of the strip of territory between the Maginot Line and the frontier. Since the outbreak of the war thousands of refugees had been taken across France in special trains to the Department of Charente-Inférieure, there to be housed in quarters previously prepared by the Government. Their treatment contrasted notably with that accorded to the inhabitants of the villages on the enemy side of the border, where evacuation was also in full swing. According to reliable reports, the scenes in these unfortunate outposts of civilian Germany resembled those seen in Belgium in August 1914, with crowds of bewildered peasants and small tradesmen abandoning their homes at the shortest notice and pushing their few portable belongings in handcarts and perambulators to unknown destinations.

In all these early operations on the Rhine-Moselle front much of the responsibility and burden of the day was borne by young French troops, but recently discharged from the barrack-square. As was intended by their superiors, these young soldiers thus gained their first experience of active service under conditions of more or less open warfare, and acquitted themselves well enough to earn special mention in an official communiqué.

Meanwhile the British Expeditionary Force was content to stay out of the news, well aware that its turn would come and profiting by these days of waiting to prepare itself in every detail to meet the full blast of war. Though this period of inaction possibly proved rather irksome to the more venturesome spirits of the "up-and-at-'em" school, on the whole it was endured philosophically enough, for the Army of 1939 differed markedly and in many ways from that of 1914.

At the beginning of the Great War the British soldier was simply a professional warrior, trained to fight and not unduly encouraged to think. War was his trade, and he pursued it faithfully and with vigour wherever it chanced to lead him—South Africa, Egypt, India, the Sudan, or any other such outpost of Empire. He was not, as a rule, much interested in other branches of human endeavour, and of the causes that provoked the wars in which he fought he knew very little and cared less. Up to 1914,

in short, the British professional soldier was a tough, single-minded specialist of specialists, and the most efficient of his type in the world.

But the Army of 1939, though equally capable in all respects, was very different in character. It consisted mainly of young, keen, intelligent men with a leavening of veterans among the senior N.C.O.s to assist them in the way that they should go. Well educated, reasonably well read, and encouraged not only to think for himself but to cultivate interests outside his profession, the average member of this second B.E.F. understood enough of world politics to realize what he was fighting for, and to appreciate the broad outline of his leaders' plan of campaign.

In its arms and equipment, too, the Army of 1939 was immeasurably superior to that of 1914. The introduction of mechanization had enormously increased its mobility, its fire-power, and its efficacy as a striking force, while improving the lot of the private soldier to a degree that would have astounded the original Old Contemptibles, who had to rely chiefly on their own feet for transport and on their own backs, assisted by a little occasional horse-power, for the carriage of their personal effects.

In its leaders this new Army was equally fortunate. The Great War had to a large extent dispelled the aura of snobbishness that formerly surrounded the professional-officer class, with the result that the modern subaltern regarded his calling as one to be taken seriously, and not merely as an excuse for wearing uniform and playing polo. (Indeed, with the almost total disappearance of the horse from the military scene, the Army's polo-playing days seemed to be more or less numbered.)

Such were the men and officers who now waited patiently behind the Maginot Line, watching their numbers increase daily as fresh units arrived from home. As they travelled across France—sometimes in trucks on which were still dimly discernible the faded legend "Hommes 40. Chevaux (en long) 8"—the newcomers looked out on scenes very similar to those which had greeted an earlier generation. Though two full decades had passed since that other British Army had fought, marched, grumbled, played complicated card-games, and sung ribald songs in Picardy, the Ile de France, and Champagne, its habits, sayings, and way of life were so well remembered by the French peasantry that these new arrivals must sometimes have felt almost as if they themselves had been there before.

Among the older inhabitants of the war-area were many who spoke rudimentary English, acquired twenty-odd years ago, and who well remembered the British soldier's major idiosyncrasies, such as his large

ideas about breakfast, his passion for ham and eggs, and his habit of lugubrious melody at all times—characteristics probably inherited from his forbears who fought at Hastings, at Crécy, and in the Wars of the Roses.

Circumstances, therefore, and the fact that history was repeating itself within the span of a man's lifetime, combined to make the task of settling down both swift and easy. In fact, within a week of their arrival in France the bulk of the B.E.F. was as much at home and on as good terms with its temporary hosts as if it had been there for months. The French, with their severely logical outlook on life, expected no sudden demonstrations of valour from these new-old Allies; for they, too, fully realized that while this spell of inactivity was enabling the French and British forces to attain the highest possible pitch of efficiency, its effect upon the nerves and temper of an enemy who could not afford to wait indefinitely must be more irritant than soothing.

Notwithstanding her valiant efforts to hide the fact from her own people, Germany was well aware that the B.E.F. had arrived and was standing ready. It is likely, therefore, that in her attempts to clear up the loose ends of the Polish campaign as rapidly as possible, she was inspired, not only by Russia's demands upon her attention, but by the fact that her forces on the Western Front would surely need big reinforcements before long. It was estimated that the army which had invaded Poland had comprised some fifty divisions, and that thirty-seven divisions had been detailed to man the Siegfried Line. To date this latter garrison had proved sufficient for its limited purposes, though not strong enough to undertake anything in the nature of a large-scale sortie against the French, or, indeed, any operation more important than an occasional counter-attack.

The French advance, however leisurely and almost aimless though it might appear to a casual observer, had now reached a point where it was becoming a definite menace to portions of the Siegfried Line. Already, in certain areas, the German artillery was being forced by circumstances to hurl shells at villages that had lain within the German lines a week or so before; while in one or two places they were finding difficulty in bringing their guns to bear upon the enemy without endangering their own advanced fortifications, so closely to the latter had the van of the French forces approached.

These factors probably explained the increased activity that now began to manifest itself at various points along the line between Luxem-



THE LATEST ANTI-TANK RIFLE—THE BOYS

bourg and the Saar. The German artillery fire took on a new intensity and viciousness ; counter-attacks against the French forward positions became more frequent, though not conspicuously more successful.

In one such action, fought on September 17th in the valley of the River Nied, which flows north-east from Bouzonville to join the Saar near Beckingen, midway between Merzig and Saarlouis, the Germans employed a full brigade of infantry. These were preceded by tanks, most of which were put out of action by the French anti-tank guns, and then shelled until they burst into flames. The infantry, endeavouring to make its way through the scanty scrub along the river banks, encountered so fiercely concentrated a volume of rifle and machine-gun fire that the attack wavered and broke before it had covered fifty yards. In this, the heaviest engagement so far upon the Western Front, the German losses were obviously serious, and the effect upon the morale of the troops concerned must have been considerable.

About the same time a lesser attack was delivered by the Germans to the east of the Moselle Valley ; and this was also beaten back. In both these actions the Germans signalled their intention by a violent preliminary bombardment, as had been their habit during the Great War : tactics resembling those of a boxer who feints in the stereotyped manner with his left before punching with his right. In all the counter-attacks attempted on this front since the beginning of the war, the Germans had so far called upon six different divisions of active troops, a fact that was established by examination of their prisoners and dead.

But although Germany had as yet failed to achieve any noteworthy success in the west, the Allied commanders were fully aware that the war on that front had not yet begun in earnest. For the moment the Nazi High Command still had its hands full in Poland, and not until that matter had been settled to the satisfaction of all except the Poles could it give its full attention to the new problems arising in the west.

Meanwhile, among responsible onlookers there was considerable speculation as to the manner in which Germany would make her first move in that quarter. It was fairly obvious that the final subjugation of Poland would be followed by a diplomatic campaign directed mainly at neutral countries and designed to persuade the world that Germany, more sinned against than sinning, wished only to be left in peace to enjoy her new-won gains ; but it was also safe to prophesy that she was doomed to fail in any such attempt at self-justification.

It was reasonable to assume, therefore, that sooner or later the war on

the Western Front would start in real earnest, and that on Germany would fall the responsibility of starting it. The Allies, long forewarned, with weeks of detailed preparation behind them and unlimited supplies of men, food, and munitions at their command, could afford to wait more or less indefinitely. Germany, in the ever-tightening grip of Britain's sea blockade, could not. It remained for her to decide whether to strike the first blow by means of a massed frontal assault upon the Maginot Line, or to try to turn the French flank at either or both ends of the Line.

True, the latter alternative, if adopted, would involve the violation of Swiss or Belgian and possibly Dutch neutrality, to say nothing of that of little Luxembourg; but this was not a consideration likely to carry much weight with the leaders of Nazi Germany, who had never shown much respect for the convenience or legal rights of smaller and less aggressive nations. A more potent argument against it was the fact that since the Great War Belgium, profiting by the bitter experience of those terrible days, had immensely strengthened her frontier defences all along the line. "Poor little Belgium," therefore, was likely to prove a far more serious obstacle to the fulfilment of Teutonic ambitions than she had been in 1914. Moreover, important fortifications now followed the Franco-Belgian border to the very edge of the North Sea: yet another and powerful barrier in the path of the would-be invader.

At the other extremity of the front, the shortness of the Swiss-German border, the difficult nature of the country through which it ran, and the known preparedness of the small but highly efficient Swiss Army were points to be carefully considered by the German High Command before any attempt was made to start trouble in that direction. As for the Maginot Line, while it was conceivable that a sustained and violent assault might succeed in effecting a temporary break-through, the cost of such an enterprise would inevitably be so appalling as to discourage the best-disciplined troops from attempting it more than once.

All things considered, and in the absence at this time of any warlike manifestations by Russia, it seemed the most plausible supposition that Germany, faced by this choice of evils, would endeavour to turn the Allies' left flank by way of Holland, Luxembourg, and Belgium, to the accompaniment of a major demonstration against the Maginot Line. This possibility was to some extent strengthened by reports of a great concentration of Nazi aircraft at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), on the Dutch frontier, of extensive troop movements behind the German-Belgian border, and of the evacuation of numerous towns and villages in those areas.

As to the accuracy or otherwise of these speculations, however, time alone could show. Meanwhile General Gamelin, the French Commander-in-Chief, continued to follow the waiting policy of his Great War predecessor, General Pétain, rather than the more thrustful methods of the latter's confrère, General Foch. Nor could it be doubted that in the circumstances this policy was the right one, if the disastrous mistakes and colossal losses associated with the names of the Somme, Loos, and Passchendaele were not to be repeated.

For the time being, therefore, the French were content to carry on their reconnaissance and exploratory work in the former No-Man's-Land, and to deal with the German counter-attacks, which were becoming increasingly numerous. On September 19th two minor actions, in both of which the enemy was driven back by concentrated machine-gun fire, took place in the region east of the River Blies. The now frequent German forays in this quarter testified to the anxiety of the Nazi High Command to dislodge the French from the high ground between Ensheim and Blieskastel, whence their artillery was now firing on Zweibrücken, nearly two miles behind the Siegfried Line and an important point in the defence of the great plain lying beyond Pirmasens to the east. Now that all the Saar river-crossings in the thirty or so miles between Saarbrücken on the west and Metlach in the east were under French fire, the central sector about Zweibrücken was becoming a vital factor in the German advanced defences.

Farther east again, from the heights about Bitsche, the guns of the Maginot Line—at this point between two and three miles from the frontier—were keeping up a steady bombardment of the fortifications of the Siegfried Line and the lesser defence-lines behind it; an attention to which the German artillery, from its positions on lower ground, was unable to reply effectively.

The almost continuous cannonade on this section of the front contrasted oddly with the complete quiet of the sector lying along the Rhine, from Lauterburg to the Swiss frontier. Across the barrier of the great river, considered by both Armies to be more or less impassable, the blockhouses of Germany faced the defences of France in discreet silence. Up to the end of the third week in September, scarcely a shot had been fired in this region. Strasbourg, however, was reported to be virtually deserted, only about 1,000 of its normal population of 20,000 remaining in the town.

At the other end of the front, in the harmless and defenceless little

Duchy of Luxembourg, uncertainty as to Germany's intentions was causing some anxiety; for if continued French successes in the Saar spurred the Germans to attempt a flank attack on the left of the Maginot Line, Luxembourg's position would be perilous indeed. By day the scene on the German side of the frontier was peaceful enough, with peasants tilling their fields, tending their fowls, and following their normal pursuits; but the sounds of military activity that were clearly audible at night suggested that these simple agriculturists were not so innocent as they appeared, but had been planted there to give a reassuring aspect to a district in which preparations were being made for war.

In this day and age, the lot of a small, peace-loving State that has the temerity to lie in the all-conquering path of a large, ambitious, and warlike neighbour is not entirely a bed of roses. Even Switzerland, with far less likelihood of being drawn into the conflict, and in a much stronger position from every point of view, was preparing for all eventualities by strengthening her defences all along the German border from Basle to the Engadine.

In the last week of September the arrival on the Western Front of General von Brauchitsch, Commander-in-Chief of the German Army, and the rumour that Herr Hitler was shortly to visit that area, coincided with a marked increase of enemy activity all long the line, and especially in the zone between the Saar and the Rhine.

At one point the Germans, departing from their usual practice of attacking only by companies, launched an entire battalion in waves against the French positions; but this was no more successful than lesser attempts had been, each wave being checked at the outset by the French rifle and machine-gun fire. This activity spread even to the tranquil sector south of Zweibrücken, and along the River Lauter between Wissenbourg and its junction with the Rhine. In the latter region—rough, wooded country, some thirty miles north of Strasbourg—no action had previously taken place since the war began.

From prisoners taken in these engagements it was learned that conditions in the Siegfried Line were not all that could be desired. The health of its defenders, and particularly of those isolated in small blockhouses with inadequate ventilation, had been impaired by the recent cold and damp; and cases of rheumatism and angina, caused by bad air-conditioning and water filtering through the concrete, were fairly numerous.

On September 25th the French artillery, breaking a silence that had lasted for three weeks, began the first bombardment of the German

positions across the grey waters of the Rhine on the borders of the Black Forest. This new sector extended for more than a hundred miles from Lauterbourg to the Swiss border near Basle, and the war on the Western Front was thus extended along the entire length of the Franco-German frontier on the Moselle and the Rhine. On both sides of the front a vast amount of artillery of all calibres was now in position and waiting, the Germans having brought up their heavy guns in great numbers to reply to those recently sent into the Saar district by the French.

The British Expeditionary Force, meanwhile, was putting to good use its period of enforced inactivity—or “strategic watchfulness,” as it was aptly termed. The British soldier is never slow to make himself at home, and the units of the original B.E.F. had now completely settled down in their new surroundings—and in a degree of comfort, in most cases, that would have aroused the pained envy of the Old Contemptibles. The speed and efficiency with which these newcomers took over towns, villages, and cantonments made a deep impression on the inhabitants, as did the skill with which they were distributed throughout their allotted areas in such a way that no casual onlooker would have noticed any unusual concentration of troops. Between the French and British soldiery friendships developed even more quickly than in 1914, probably because the lack of any active operations enabled them to get acquainted in comparatively peaceful conditions.

In and behind the Maginot Line the French also remained strategically watchful. While their guns thundered by night and day, their infantry continued their explorations into “No-Man’s-Land” and the clearing up of mines and booby-traps left behind by the enemy. Overhead the Allies’ aircraft ranged up and down the Siegfried Line, photographing its key-points and main defensive positions with a painstaking thoroughness that proved as useful to their artillery as it was annoying to the foe. It is likely, indeed, that by the end of the first month of the war there was not much about the lay-out and general disposition of Germany’s vaunted “West Wall” that remained unknown to the Allied High Command. That the Germans had photographed the Maginot Line with the same detailed accuracy was very improbable, as only a few of their machines had appeared over French territory at a height suitable for camera-work; and most of these had been quickly driven off.

All in all, the situation on the Western Front at this time was considered in every way satisfactory by the Allied High Command. The possibility of an attempted break-through by the Germans was never for a moment

overlooked ; but in the meantime the French had gained considerable ground, smashed a whole series of blockhouses and machine-gun nests—the advanced elements of the Siegfried Line—and taken a number of villages of tactical importance. Now, with the help of the Allied Air Forces, attention was being paid to the Siegfried Line itself, on which the heavy artillery was getting to work with satisfying results.

With the coming of autumn it was clear that weather conditions, and particularly visibility, would play an important part in whatever operations developed. Here the Allies had already secured an advantage, since, thanks to the enterprise of their reconnaissance planes, they undoubtedly knew more about military conditions in the back areas of the Rhineland than the enemy had learned about similar conditions in France.

By September 29th the French advance-guard west of Saarbrücken had pushed forward so far towards the River Saar that certain outposts were actually on the left bank of this " moat " of the Siegfried Line. On that day it was reported that the Mettlach chateau of Herr von Papen, former Chancellor of the Reich, and now German Ambassador to Turkey, was under French artillery fire.

According to a neutral correspondent who visited the Siegfried Line at this time, Saarbrücken itself was now almost a dead city, except for the area about the railway-station, whence large quantities of coal were being evacuated into the interior. This observer, incidentally, noted that certain of the concrete defences of the town had been built in the shape of dummy houses, with doors and windows painted on them.

Hereabouts, and elsewhere along the Rhine-Moselle front, about fifty German villages were now in French hands, while the daily tale of prisoners, though seldom large, continued steadily to mount. Among the portents now engaging the attention of the Allied Command were German troop-movements from the Black Forest region towards Saarbrücken and Kehl, opposite Strasbourg, and in the Freiburg-Basle-Constance triangle, which is bordered on two sides by the Rhine, and where any assault by the enemy on the junctions of the Swiss, French, and German frontiers would presumably originate.

There can be little doubt that in all these early operations the Allied losses were considerably smaller than the German. The cautious leadership of the French and the methodical character of their advance kept their casualties to a minimum, but the enemy's counter-attacks suffered heavily from rifle and machine-gun fire. It was possibly with a view to distracting the world's attention from this fact that Herr Hitler invited a

party of neutral correspondents to make a tour of the Siegfried Line, in order, as he said, "that they might inform the world on the real state of this modern fortification." With becoming modesty the Führer added that the impregnability of the "West Wall" was absolute, inasmuch as he had planned part of it himself: a revelation that was perhaps more interesting than convincing.

The effect produced by Herr Hitler's profession of faith was slightly marred by the disclosure by the French High Command of the fact that in the preceding four or five days the garrison of the Siegfried Line had been nearly doubled. It was estimated that in the pillboxes, blockhouses, dummy villages, and other fortifications there were now fifty German divisions, in addition to the garrisons of Freiburg, Rastatt, Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Mainz, Wiesbaden, and Coblenz.

At the beginning of October the civilian population of Karlsruhe was withdrawn. Seven German towns, with populations ranging from Karlsruhe's 140,000 to the 3,000 of Bergzabern, had now been evacuated, and had declined from important industrial centres to mere military bases. At the same time it became evident that the Germans were making strenuous efforts to strengthen that portion of the Siegfried Line which faced the Belgian frontier. Between Duisburg in the south and Aachen in the north at least ten thousand civilians, in addition to large numbers of troops, were employed on excavation work, while all persons of Belgian origin living in the area had been expelled across the border. For several miles parallel with, and in full view of, the Belgian frontier, the Germans had erected an artificial "curtain" or barrier of boughs and trees, some sixteen feet high; and there was much speculation locally as to what this might be intended to conceal. Neutral observers who visited the Siegfried Line at this and other points were unanimously of the opinion that the "West Wall" was designed for defensive purposes only, for its heavy artillery was built into positions from which it could not easily be moved, while the minefields and tank-traps laid before the Line were calculated to hinder advancing Germans no less than invading French troops.

Undisturbed by these recent additions to the enemy's ranks, the French had now completed the clearing-up of the Forest of Warndt—a task that had occupied them ever since the Forest had been taken by their Moroccan troops at the beginning of the war. In the course of this work no fewer than 6,000 German land-mines were discovered, many of them linked together, so that the explosion of one detonated a number of others. In the Forest the French outposts were now eight miles inside

the German frontier, while the total area of enemy territory occupied at this date was 154 square miles. The German casualties on the Western Front for the month of September were reliably computed at between 500 and 600 killed, 2,500 wounded, and from 200 to 300 prisoners.

On October 5th it was announced that by a surprise attack the French had succeeded in occupying Borg Forest, near the Luxembourg frontier, and were pushing forward towards the road running from Remich, in Luxembourg, to join the Metz-Trier main road at Saarburg. The capture of this position, six miles within German territory, would obviously be of great tactical value ; and the possibility that the enemy might choose to violate Luxembourg's neutrality in the hope of checking the French advance in that neighbourhood became a point of interest to the Allied High Command. The opinion of those best qualified to judge, however, was that if any such enterprise were undertaken by the Germans, it would be on Herr Hitler's sole responsibility and against the advice of his generals, in view of the inevitable indignation that would be aroused in neutral circles.

Autumn had now unmistakably arrived, and weather conditions on the whole Western Front were changing for the worse. Heavy rains and low visibility tended to hamper the work of the aircraft and artillery ; but the patrols of both sides remained active in spite of the rain and mud, while the French sappers pushed on with their task of reorganizing the rear defences of the Warndt Forest against a possible enemy offensive.

In the Ohrenthal salient, south-east of Zweibrücken, a sudden increase in German artillery fire heralded a series of assaults, described as "extremely tenacious," by waves of German infantry ; but these were adequately dealt with by the French artillery and machine-guns. The Ohrenthal salient represented an Allied advance into German territory about nine miles wide and five or six miles deep ; an advance based on the little town of Bitsche, which in peacetime was one of the training-centres for the garrison of the Maginot Line. As the extreme tip of this salient was but four miles from Zweibrücken, the German artillery, in its efforts to strike at the French reserves, was forced to shell several villages that had formerly belonged to the Reich.

Work on the section of the Siegfried Line facing the Belgian frontier was now more or less completed. Its pillboxes, blockhouses, and miniature forts were fully manned by troops who had arrived during the past few days. These were mostly local men from Aachen and its neighbourhood, with a small proportion of "veterans" of the Polish campaign ; and

it was the freely stated belief of these warriors that they had come "to protect the Belgians"—though from what evil fate the latter required such protection was not disclosed. These martial manifestations were viewed with no great enthusiasm by the citizens of Aachen, who had to cope not only with frequent false air-raid alarms, but with a shortage of essential foods and—perhaps the unkindest cut of all—a new war-tax on beer.

At the other end of the Siegfried Line a sudden rise of two feet in the level of the Rhine, the result of two weeks of continuous rain, was causing some alarm to the Nazi General Staff. Between Basle and Strasbourg certain section of the Line were in danger of inundation, and alternative fortifications were being hastily constructed on higher ground. Built as recently as the spring of 1938, this portion of the "West Wall" had not the solidity and weather-resisting qualities of the Maginot Line, and with the approach of winter its defenders had good reason to envy their more comfortably lodged adversaries across the river.

About this time the Germans introduced a new, if minor, horror into the campaign in the form of raucous propaganda, broadcast from loud-speakers in their front line and aimed at the French outposts. As the latter, being more or less defenceless against this novel mode of attack, philosophically chose to regard it purely as light entertainment, its effect upon their morale was rather uplifting than otherwise.

Meanwhile the work of patrolling and exploring No-Man's-Land was continued by both sides. In the first week of October hand-to-hand combats between French and German patrols were unusually frequent, though there was no major engagement, and for the first time the enemy approached the Allied lines sufficiently closely to indulge in hand-grenade fighting.

On October 11th Mr. Hore-Belisha, in a speech to the House of Commons, described how the British Expeditionary Force had been transported to France intact and without a single casualty, and gave details of the Government's plans for recruiting the nation's man-power. The War Minister revealed that within five weeks of the outbreak of hostilities, 158,000 men had been conveyed to France, the necessary bases established, and the lines of communication organized. Though the convoys needed to transport this great force had averaged three a night, no single life had been lost, nor had any serious mishap occurred.

By way of contrast, the War Minister recalled that in 1914 it took six weeks to transport 148,000 men across the Channel, and that whereas the Army of that day had only 800 motor-vehicles in all, the B.E.F. of

1939 was accompanied by no fewer than 25,000 such vehicles, representing fifty different types and including tanks weighing fifteen tons apiece or more. The successful organization of the essential fuel supplies for this monstrous regiment of engines was a feat upon which those responsible might justly pride themselves—the more so in that, owing to the ever-present possibility of attack from the air, both men and vehicles had had to be handled in small groups, lying concealed about the countryside by day and moving towards their allotted stations after dark.

With regard to the nation's reserves of man-power, the War Minister disclosed that in addition to the steady flow of recruits assured by the National Service Act, which rendered liable to service all male citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-one, a quota of volunteers was being admitted into the Army with each batch of Militiamen. Since the outbreak of war, nearly fifty thousand such volunteers of all ages had joined the Colours, and in the month of September the number of voluntary enlistments was actually double that of the Militiamen.

Since it was proposed also to form a number of Home Defence Battalions, each attached to its county regiment and manned by older men and those unfit for foreign service, there would be opportunities for volunteers and recruits of all ages to play their part; and the alacrity with which these opportunities were being grasped augured excellently for the future.

Of the great fighting force which had thus been so swiftly and safely ferried across the Channel, no unit had yet been in action. At this stage of the war, when the fighting was confined chiefly to artillery duels and the infantry of both sides was content to explore and skirmish and reconnoitre, the French Army was more than competent to hold its section of the front. For the moment the B.E.F. had no active part to play in the campaign, and was able to devote all its energies to completing its preparations, testing and perfecting its lines of communication, and getting acclimatized to life under wartime conditions in a foreign land. With lectures, drills, technical exercises, and the many daily duties that mechanization had brought in its train, the time passed rapidly enough; and although there were inevitably those who found this way of life vaguely disappointing and longed for an opportunity to try conclusions with the enemy, the majority realized that this period of waiting, in the circumstances, was unavoidable, and that the day of battle was by no means cancelled, but only postponed.

That the Germans were somewhat apprehensive as to the intentions

of the Allies and the significance of this *guerre d'attente* was obvious from the efforts made by them to ascertain the precise whereabouts of the British forces. By broadcasting through their loud-speakers suggestions that no British troops had as yet arrived in France, and that France was to be left to fight the war without any help from perfidious Albion, they endeavoured to evoke informative answers from the French outposts. This expedient failing, their patrols became increasingly active in their attempts to capture prisoners for questioning.

Near Saarbrücken, on October 12th, a party of some two hundred Germans, profiting by the early morning mist, managed to reach the barbed wire protecting the French outposts before their presence was detected by a sentry. In the ensuing sharp action the German hand-grenades proved no match for the French machine-guns and when the enemy fell back they left more than thirty dead and wounded to mark their failure.

A similar raid, staged near Pirmasens later on the same day, was broken and beaten back by the French rifle and machine-gun fire before the raiders reached the French wire. Between the Saar and the Moselle the German guns kept up a heavy fire, putting down a box-barrage—that is, three lines of fire, the farthest being designed to cut off the retreat of the men in the positions attacked—in more than one place following it up with an attack in force. All these assaults, however, were repulsed, with losses on both sides. From the enemy's point of view, the only value of these abortive enterprises was that they enabled the German High Command to estimate to some extent the fighting-power of the French forces.

Although the possibility of a sudden large-scale offensive by the Germans had by no means been ruled out of consideration, the fact that the weather was now steadily getting worse encouraged the belief that no major land operations were likely to be attempted by either side before the spring, and that in the meantime the war would be carried on chiefly at sea and in the air. The situation on the Western Front, indeed, approximated to that which had obtained in France and Flanders during the winters of 1916 and 1917, with both Armies firmly entrenched and refraining from squandering their resources in costly and unprofitable undertakings.

Immediately behind the lines the normal life of the French countryside continued almost undisturbed. All young and middle-aged men having been summoned to the Colours, the work of the fields was carried

on by the women, old men, and boys too young for military service, and these calmly pursued their tasks to the accompaniment of distant gun-fire and surrounded by all the orderly confusion of war. Even from villages actually in the front line there was little voluntary evacuation, except for a certain number of children. In general the life of the civil population went on more or less as usual, the inhabitants of the war zone accepting with the stoic philosophy of the French peasant the possibility that at any moment their homes might be shelled out of existence and their property and livelihood destroyed.

Meanwhile the troops went forward with their preparations for the winter. More fortunate than their predecessors of 1914, the British forces for the most part were housed in comfortable billets. From these they issued forth each day to their work of digging fire and communication trenches, erecting wire entanglements, building pillboxes and block-houses, and constructing tank-traps. To lighten and expedite these labours mechanical excavators were employed, to the awed delight of veterans who remembered the bad old days when the entrenching-tool and an occasional shovel were about the only implements available for such work.

In the third week of October a new series of German troop-movements attracted the interest of the Allied High Command. Several divisions from the Polish front, re-formed and re-equipped since their return to Germany, were reported to have crossed the Rhine at various points and gone into camps or billets on the heights south of Coblenz. These were accompanied by large numbers of tanks, while at the same time reinforcements of heavy artillery were brought up to positions previously prepared behind the line Merzig-Saarbrücken-Pirmasens.

As a precautionary measure against whatever developments these preparations might portend, French engineers destroyed three of the bridges that crossed the Rhine between Basle and Lauterburg—at Wintersdorf, Drisach, and Neuenburg. The road and rail bridges connecting Strasbourg and Kehl were left standing, but with all arrangements made for their instant demolition in case of need.

On October 16th the Germans delivered an attack in force on a four-mile front near the Luxembourg border, immediately east of the Moselle. Forewarned by a violent creeping barrage, the French outposts withdrew from their positions, leaving a number of concealed land-mines behind. As the Germans advanced—many of them, it was noticed, wearing steel breastplates and vizors—these mines exploded, causing severe losses.

The vanguard of the attacking force penetrated as far as Apach, on the French frontier, but there encountered intense machine-gun fire that forced them to fall back before they could establish themselves actually in the village. In addition to casualties estimated at between 500 and 1,000, the Germans lost a number of tanks in this engagement, and in the end were compelled to yield all the ground they had temporarily gained.

Later on the same day a second assault was launched on a larger scale when the Germans attacked on a twenty-mile front south of Blieskastel and Zweibrücken. In this action, which was preceded, as usual, by a furious artillery bombardment and lasted for about two hours, six enemy divisions were employed in an attempt to drive the French back across the frontier. In accordance with their prearranged plans, the French troops fell back to their defensive positions, and from these directed a great volume of rifle and machine-gun fire at the enemy, checking their advance and forcing them eventually to withdraw. In this fighting, again, the Germans incurred many casualties from the land-mines with which the French, taking a leaf from the Nazis' own book, had sown the ground between their outposts and their main positions.

In the official French communiqué dealing with this day's fighting it was revealed that the greater part of the French forces which had been operating in enemy territory since the beginning of the war had been withdrawn to other positions a fortnight previously, and that since then contact with the Germans had been maintained only by light advanced troops and a few supporting units. It was calculated also that in these two attacks the Germans had employed between 90,000 and 100,000 men, and that their casualties in all amounted to some 6,000 or 7,000—a heavy price to pay for so inadequate a reward.

On the following day, the 17th, the Germans made a small sally south of Saarbrücken, but were driven back by machine-gun fire after a brisk exchange of hand-grenades. Signs of activity behind the German lines were very noticeable at this time, and especially at night, when a great coming and going of transport was revealed by the headlights of lorries and the flashes of electric torches which were plainly visible to the French observers and afforded useful targets for their artillery.

Even if the enemy had wished to undertake a big offensive, the evil weather now prevailing all along the front would effectively have thwarted that ambition. As a result of heavy and continuous rain, the Rhine was still rising, and the sound of pumps at work on the German side was clearly audible to the garrison of the French defences. The Moselle, too,

had overflowed its banks and flooded the lower portions of its valley, rendering roads impassable and hampering the movements of troops and transport.

On October 19th the German High Command issued what was described as a "review" of the operations to date on the Western Front. This was presumably designed to reassure the German people, for although it admitted that German territory had been invaded and occupied by the Allied forces, it claimed that no serious fighting had occurred anywhere on the front, and that up to October 17th the German casualties amounted only to 169 dead, 356 wounded, and 114 missing. This somewhat optimistic document concluded with the acid statement that "British troops had not yet been seen anywhere in the front lines on the Western Front."

It was doubtless as a reply to this last innuendo that the Allied High Command announced on the following day that an advance-guard of 30,000 British troops was now in position facing the Siegfried Line, alongside the thirty-two divisions of the French Army. This news caused widespread satisfaction in France, where it was accepted as confirmation of Britain's expressed intention to throw her full weight into the struggle whenever General Gamelin saw fit to call upon her.

At the same time, in a semi-official comment on the German "review of operations," the French authorities declared themselves unable to accept the enemy's official casualty figures, and pointed out that these were demonstrably inaccurate. It was disclosed also that although the French had withdrawn the greater part of their front-line troops on October 3rd, leaving only a few scattered detachments to hold the outposts, this manœuvre was not discovered by the Germans until ten days later.

With the war now entering its eighth week, the condition of stalemate on the Western Front remained unchanged. The British Expeditionary Force, now nearly 200,000 strong, had not yet suffered a single casualty from enemy action. Daily more and more troops were moving up from their various bases, and the vast military machine becoming more and more efficient and smooth-running. Despite the bad weather of the past few weeks, the health of the British forces was as excellent as their spirits, possibly because even those stationed nearest to the front were living in a comfort unheard of in the last war. This Army of 1939 had yet to learn of the squalor of trench-life, of rats and cockroaches, of leaking dug-outs, trench-raids, incessant shell-fire, and the constant expectation

of alarms ; but those who were best qualified to judge had no doubt that these tribulations, if and when they arrived, would be faced with the same indomitable spirit that the fathers of this new generation of soldiers had shown twenty-five years before.

The question of leave to England was already under consideration, and it was hoped that, if the military situation permitted, men who had missed their embarkation leave would shortly be able to enjoy ten days or a fortnight at home. Arrangements were also being made to entertain the troops even in the forward areas with mobile cinemas, vaudeville shows, and concert parties. No effort, in short, was being spared to keep the men healthy and content during their period of comparative inaction.

That this period, in all the circumstances, was inevitable was made clear on October 21st by Mr. Hore-Belisha in a broadcast survey of the military situation. The War Minister pointed out that Germany had but three courses open to her. She could try to smash through simultaneously by land, sea, and air ; she could remain quiet, in the hope that the Allies would prematurely take the offensive against her ; or she could try to lure her adversaries into discussion of specious terms of peace. As to the first of these alternatives, it was a military axiom that an offensive against prepared positions was usually both expensive and profitless ; and the Allies would demand a terrible payment for any massed onslaught upon the Maginot Line. Yet while Germany held her hand, the forces of the Allies and their Dominions were steadily gathering momentum, and the Nazi High Command *must be uneasily aware that this period of waiting was increasingly to the advantage of France and Britain.* As an example, the huge Army in training in Britain had that very day been augmented by the first batch of recruits to be called up under the National Service (Armed Forces) Act—no fewer than a quarter of a million men.

On the Western Front, then, conditions remained quiet, owing partly to the execrable weather, apart from the usual patrol activities, aerial reconnaissances and artillery work. The French forward troops had now established themselves in new positions along a line carefully prepared before the war began. This line lay for the most part in French territory, though a number of observation posts and advanced positions had been retained on the German side of the frontier. By withdrawing to this new line, which was still a considerable distance in front of the main Maginot defence system, the French had led the enemy into an uncomfortable position, for as a result of the heavy rains which had caused the Rhine,

the Moselle, and the Blies to overflow their banks, the ground now occupied by the German advanced troops was little better than a swamp.

From the Luxembourg frontier it could be seen that the German trenches on the far bank of the Moselle were inundated and unusable, while the Luxembourg bank and the Schengen-Remich road were under water in several places. A number of casemates on the German bank of the Rhine had been abandoned, efforts to keep them dry by pumping having failed; and the No-Man's-Land on the Rhine-Moselle front—still as much as six miles wide in places—was now virtually a sea of mud, in which the enemy's transport and heavy artillery ran the risk of becoming bogged under the fire of the French guns.

The prospect of any big offensive by the enemy therefore receded still farther; but small-scale engagements, ambushes, and raids by both sides were still of frequent occurrence. Thus, at Forbach, on October 23rd, an attack by a full company of the enemy was repulsed by a French outpost, who took a number of prisoners; and in the Forest of Warndt a similar skirmish, in which hand-grenades were freely used, had much the same result.

In the intervals between these activities the Germans pursued their front-line propaganda campaign with unremitting zeal, if with indifferent success. Their motor-vans, fitted with loud-speakers, toured up and down the front, pausing at strategic points to broadcast recent speeches by the Nazi leaders and plaintive appeals to the French to renounce the false friendship of Britain. As the French reply to these blandishments normally took the form of a burst of machine-gun fire, this particular type of frightfulness seemed scarcely worth the trouble; but that the Germans had considerable faith in it was shown by the fact that they installed permanent loud-speakers all along the Rhine front, to the entertainment of the French on the opposite bank.

In the last week of October a heavy fall of snow throughout the Rhine-Moselle front still further impeded active operations. The Allied Armies spent much time in strengthening their positions against the coming winter—cutting drainage-systems for their trenches, felling trees to improve their fields of fire, laying new wire and repairing camouflage damaged by wind and rain.

When not so engaged, those units of the B.E.F. which were not actually in the line continued their technical training. Notwithstanding the weather, the lighter mechanized columns were out almost every day, rehearsing manœuvres that might prove useful when this curious war

emerged from its present state of stagnation. In the event of open warfare developing, these light armoured formations—the modern equivalent of cavalry—would be the first to make contact with the enemy. Many of them, indeed, were famous cavalry regiments, now mechanized, but still wearing their old insignia. It was a sign of the adaptability of the modern soldier that the officers and men of these formerly mounted units were now as adept in manœuvring their light tanks and armoured vehicles as they had been in handling their horses.

In the closing days of October the weather on the Western Front improved slightly, and the activities of the German patrols, raiding-parties, and artillery noticeably increased. At the same time came news of fresh troop concentrations along the Dutch and Belgian frontiers, and a report that Herr Hitler was about to visit his "West Wall" and assume effective, as distinct from merely nominal, control of the German Army.

In some quarters it was thought that these symptoms might betoken an attempt by the enemy to force the issue in the west before winter laid its full grip upon the war zone. But as the days passed uneventfully, and the official communiqués of both sides relapsed into their customary terseness, it became clear that if the Nazi High Command had indeed entertained such a project, it was being held in abeyance for the time being.

The weather continuing to improve, the German heavy artillery came into action for the first time on the last day of October, firing at a range of twelve and a half miles and dropping shells into a village six miles behind the French lines. On the day following, the Germans delivered a determined assault on a village east of Saarbrücken, held by a detachment of French infantry. After a bombardment lasting more than an hour, a battalion of the enemy, some 800 strong, attacked the village and succeeded in encircling it. A counter-attack, however, was at once launched by the French, and the Germans driven out with considerable loss. A second and smaller raid, carried out by the Germans about nine miles east of the Moselle, was a total failure; while west of the frontier town of Forbach, on the Metz-Saarbrücken road, a French patrol raided a hostile observation post, capturing an officer and half a dozen men. During the next few days the outskirts of Forbach received a good deal of attention from the German long-range guns, which dropped more than two hundred shells around the town, presumably with the object of hindering the transport of supplies to the French outposts.

The first week of November passed quietly everywhere on the front, with only the daily artillery duels and skirmishes between patrols to break the monotony. Only a small proportion of the French forces were involved in these minor activities; the remainder occupied themselves in consolidating their positions and preparing for the winter. Among the duties that had devolved upon the Army since the outbreak of war was that of caring for various village areas that had been evacuated by their inhabitants. To save these tracts of country from degenerating into wilderness, detachments of troops took over the task of tilling the fields, tending the cattle, harvesting the beetroot crop, and even operating the sugar refineries, a faithful account of the work done being rendered to the absent owners of the land.

Of the troops more martially employed, the artillery had the least cause to complain of boredom. To the French gunners, with their memories of what their country had suffered in the last war—“*l'autre*,” as it was generally referred to—it was a source of great satisfaction that their shells were now falling in Germany. When their guns spoke, it was enemy soil that shook and erupted under the impact; and if the Germans saw fit to bombard a French village, the retaliation was crushing and swift.

While the armies of the belligerents were thus marking time, the Governments of neutral Holland and Belgium were becoming increasingly uneasy. With vast German forces, including seasoned shock-troops from Poland, massed along their frontiers, and a violent campaign against them raging in the Nazi Press, these nations had good reason to view the future with apprehension. To them it seemed not unreasonable to assume that Herr Hitler, realizing the impossibility of breaking through the Maginot Line, might choose to violate Dutch and/or Belgian neutrality. The fact that he had no quarrel with either country was not likely to outweigh the desirability of securing the Dutch deltas as bases for his submarines and the plains of Flanders as taking-off grounds for his aircraft in their assaults on Britain.

On November 6th King Leopold of Belgium paid a surprise visit to The Hague and held a long conference with Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands; and on the following day, these two Sovereigns issued a joint plea for peace. In this appeal, which took the form of a telegram addressed to the heads of the States at war—Great Britain, France, and Germany—they offered their services as mediators between the warring parties, with a view to discovering a basis for an equitable and lasting peace.

The reaction of the British and French Governments to this suggestion was wholly consistent with their frequently stated policy. While the high and humane motives inspiring the Dutch-Belgian offer of intervention were fully appreciated, it was felt that there was little hope, in view of past experience, of a satisfactory response from Germany. As for the latter nation, her first response to the appeal took the form of a very brief reference to it on the wireless, in which no mention was made of any communication from Holland and Belgium having been received by the Nazi Government.

In view of information subsequently gathered by the Allies, there can be little doubt that Herr Hitler had indeed made up his mind to invade Holland at this date, and that his troops actually had orders to march on November 10th or 11th. The cancellation—or postponement—of this plan was probably due to the objections advanced by his General Staff, who succeeded in convincing him that so flagrant a breach of the neutrality laws would deeply affront world opinion and gravely injure Germany's prestige abroad. For the time being, at any rate, therefore, the Führer yielded to the advice of those better qualified than himself to judge the military situation, and the crisis passed.

It is a matter for speculation whether, in shelving this project, Herr Hitler was influenced by the mysterious and abortive attempt on his life on November 8th, when a time-bomb exploded in the Munich Beer Hall where he had been attending the anniversary celebrations of the Putsch of 1923. The Führer himself had left the hall when the explosion occurred, but a number of his lesser henchmen were killed or wounded; and the outrage was at once—and inevitably—attributed by Berlin to British agency, though no evidence was ever adduced to support this allegation.

While these events were taking place elsewhere, on November 8th the Germans attempted three *coups-de-main* on the Western Front in greater strength than they had hitherto employed. Attacks were made on three French outposts; one immediately to the east of the Moselle, in the Apach sector; a second against the front about twelve miles farther east; and a third immediately to the east of the Ohrenthal salient. All these were vigorously delivered and insistently pressed, but each was repulsed with fairly heavy enemy losses.

At the same time the German Air Force, emulating British tactics, embarked on a series of tract-dropping excursions over North-eastern France. The leaflets showered upon the defenceless populace were

mainly of a Communistic character, consisting of extracts from speeches by M. Molotov, the Soviet Premier and Foreign Minister. This new affliction was endured with admirable stoicism by the victims—including those inhabitants of Luxembourg who, owing to a slight error of judgment on the part of those responsible, found themselves puzzling over messages intended for French African troops.

The weather had now somewhat improved, but aerial photographs of the Siegfried Line, published in London newspapers, showed unmistakably that in several places the German fortifications were under water. (Water, indeed, must have loomed large in the thoughts of the German High Command at this time, for on November 10th the Dutch Government took the precaution of opening the dykes of the Zuyder Zee and flooding a hundred miles of country to the south : Holland's traditional and very effective first line of defence against invasion.)

On the other side of No-Man's-Land the British Expeditionary Force had now all but finished its task of improving and solidifying the defence system of the sector taken over from the French. Although the British had been presented with a ready-made line of blockhouses and tank-traps, much had remained to be done ; and now the job was practically complete. New trenches had been dug, fitted with fire-steps and revetted with brushwood, additional tank-traps constructed, and new pillboxes built as a link between existing blockhouses. Many extra batteries, including heavy guns, had been brought up and carefully sited in pits so skilfully camouflaged as to be invisible from a short distance. Stocks of ammunition had been accumulated at central points, and anti-aircraft batteries installed where they were most likely to be of use. All these elaborate defences had yet to be put to the test of actual war ; but the rumour that the garrison of the Siegfried Line was again being considerably strengthened led the more martially minded to hope that the day of trial might not be much longer deferred.

By the end of the second week in November, it was apparent that the tension on the Dutch-German frontier had been greatly eased, and that the likelihood of a German attack in the quarter was much diminished. Britain and France had both replied formally to the peace appeal of the two Sovereigns, expressing their readiness at any time to examine any suggested basis for a lasting peace, but implying that any such suggestion must emanate from Germany. Meanwhile, although the immediate danger seemed to have passed, the Dutch authorities pushed ahead with their defence measures, particularly in the "Maastricht appendix," that

narrow strip of territory, running south between Belgium and Germany, which was considered Holland's most vulnerable area.

Belgium, too, although—or possibly because—Herr von Ribbentrop had recently assured the Belgian Ambassador in Berlin that the Reich had no evil intentions towards either Belgium or Holland—took the precaution of manning her main defences and partly evacuating certain frontier villages. Not until November 14th did Herr Hitler deign to reply to Queen Wilhelmina and King Leopold; and then his answer was merely to the effect that he regarded their offer of mediation as “annulled” by the “brusque nature” of the French and British replies. This characteristic message was not even delivered in a written communication, as common courtesy demanded, but verbally to the Belgian Ambassador by Herr von Ribbentrop.

On the Rhine-Moselle front conditions remained very quiet, so far as actual hostilities were concerned. Both sides continued to patrol No-Man's-Land, but seldom with units larger than a section. For reasons best known to themselves, the Nazi Press and wireless chose to jeer incessantly at the B.E.F., attributing its non-appearance in the fighting-line to the fact that it preferred to “fight to the last Frenchman.” (The point of this too-often repeated witticism was rather blunted by the official French announcement that Britain's losses at sea and in the air to date were greater than those of her Ally.) Many of the German patrols were now armed with light machine-guns, some of which were fitted with powerful electric torches that directed a ray of light towards the target when the trigger was pressed. Another Nazi experiment of this period involved the carrying of tall poles surmounted by electric bulbs, the idea being to tempt the French to fire at the light and reveal their own position by their rifle-flashes.

At this time rumours were freely circulating in neutral capitals of hesitation and divided counsel among the Nazi leaders. It was rumoured that the High Command was anxious to preserve the war-machine intact as long as possible, so that in the event of Germany being forced by economic factors to sue for terms, she could appear at the peace conference as a strong military Power. For this reason, and because they were not too hopeful of attaining victory by force of arms alone, the military leaders were said to be definitely reluctant to undertake a big offensive. This did not mean, however, that they were prepared to disobey the Führer's orders on this point; in the last resort it would be Herr Hitler alone who would decide whether to hurl his Army against the Maginot

Line, launch an attack upon some neutral country, or husband his resources through the winter in the hope that developments elsewhere would provide better opportunities in the spring.

Towards the middle of November rumours of discontent in Greater Germany were to some extent confirmed when the official German News Agency revealed that nine Czech students had been executed in Prague, a number of others arrested, and all Czech universities closed for three years. These measures were said to have been made necessary by the activities of supporters of ex-President Benes, who "had for some considerable time tried to disturb public order in the Protectorate by minor and major acts of resistance." Justifying the executions—of which many more occurred during the next few days—on the ground that "Germany was at war," the Nazi authorities in Prague put the University and the headquarters of the student organizations under police control, and imported several thousand S.S. guards to keep order in the city. As a result of these disturbances, on November 18th martial law was declared in Prague and other towns, and in the following two days between 30,000 and 40,000 Czechs were arrested and thrown into concentration camps.

Simultaneously came the news that the first food riots of the war, organized and led by women, had occurred in Vienna, that a high Nazi police official in that city had been assassinated, and that acts of sabotage had been committed by persons unknown at the great Hermann Goering Works at Linz.

On the Western Front, meanwhile, the weather had changed again for the worse. Violent storms swept No-Man's-Land, uprooting many trees and interrupting all military activity. The Rhine rose ominously, and the River Lauter, forming the frontier between Wissembourg and Luxembourg, was also in flood. On November 19th and 20th the British Minister of War visited the front, touring both the French and British zones and conferring with General Gamelin and the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Gort.

On November 21st it was disclosed by the French High Command that facts had recently come to light confirming the suspicion that the Germans had intended to launch a big offensive between November 10th and 14th. The Nazis' plan had been to attack all along the line from Holland to the Rhine, and its last-minute cancellation, when all necessary preparations had been made, had been due partly to fear of the disapproval of important neutrals, and partly to Belgium's declaration that in the event of an attack on Holland she would take measures "to

strengthen the resistance of the Netherlands and to facilitate the bringing of help by Britain and France."

In a speech to the House of Commons on November 22nd, Mr. Hore-Belisha, touching on his recent visit to the front, declared himself wholly satisfied with the progress of what he described as "the fortress war." Pointing out that, whereas Germany had but 200 miles of frontier to defend, France had to envisage the possibility of attack anywhere along the 800 miles between the North Sea and the Alps, the War Minister paid a tribute to the Polish Army, whose heroism, by interposing a delay of several weeks, had greatly aided the concentration of the French and British forces.

As to the British Army, this was growing daily. In addition to the Militia classes that had been called up, 85,000 voluntary recruits had been absorbed since the beginning of the war. Over 7,000 men from the ranks had been recommended for commissions, while the numbers of the Auxiliary Territorial Service—"that admirable regiment of women"—had been increased to 40,000. "Thus," concluded the War Minister, "the war proceeds. It is a war of endurance, a quality for which the British people is renowned. Every day that passes finds us stronger, for on our side we can afford to choose our opportunity. Our strategy is predetermined, and so is the issue of this struggle."

In the last week of November a further fall of snow again held up the operations on the Western Front. The French and German official communiqués consisted chiefly of terse, one-line statements, usually to the effect that there was little or nothing to report. All the same, by day and night the work of the patrols went on; raiding-parties from both sides made their sudden descents upon the enemy's outposts; the guns of both armies carried on their spasmodic duels. By neutral observers on the spot it was felt that the fighting was heavier than the official communiqués acknowledged, and that the number of wounded, particularly on the German side, was greater than was generally realized, judging by the number of hospital trains to be seen moving in the back areas. This may well have been the case, since encounters between patrols usually resulted in brisk little duels with hand-grenades and small arms. Indeed, a feature of modern close-range fighting, as exemplified in these minor raids and skirmishes, appeared to be the displacement of the rifle and bayonet by the bomb and automatic pistol as the infantryman's chief weapons.

These incidents apart, the third month of the war drew to a close with

conditions on the Rhine-Moselle front in a state of what might almost be described as "armed tranquillity." Winter had now set in, and it seemed reasonable to assume that Germany had decided to wait at least a couple of months before attempting any large-scale offensive. If this were so, the Allied High Command had no cause for complaint. Their position, already strong, grew stronger every day as more and more troops arrived from Britain to strengthen the defences of the Maginot Line.

No unit of the British Expeditionary Force had as yet been in action, but it had done much work of an immensely valuable, if unspectacular, nature, and earned the admiration and friendship of its French comrades-in-arms. If some of its more ardent members were at times inclined to envy the Navy and the R.A.F. their more active participation in events, they had the consolation of knowing that their time would assuredly come, and that when it came it would find them well prepared.

At home in England the civilian population suffered, good-humouredly but in some bewilderment, innumerable small restrictions on their personal liberty and comfort. In Germany there were signs that Herr Hitler's views on world-domination were not entirely approved by all classes. And along the eastern borders of Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg the inhabitants of those neutral countries watched and waited, with the misgivings natural in small nations neighboured by the Nazi State.

CHAPTER 3

NAVAL OPERATIONS

BY REGINALD CAMPBELL

IN August 1939 the British Reserve Fleet was put in a state of almost complete mobilization and took part in the summer Home Fleet manœuvres in company with the normally fully commissioned ships of the Royal Navy. On September 1st complete mobilization, involving the calling up of the whole of the eligible pensioners, Royal Fleet Reserve, Royal Naval Reserve, and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, was announced. On September 3rd, at 11.10 a.m., the Prime Minister announced that a state of war existed between England and Germany. That evening the colourful personality of Mr. Winston Churchill was included in the War Cabinet, the news of his appointment as First Lord of the Admiralty being received with satisfaction, both in civilian and naval circles; his warnings concerning Germany's rearmament, his reiteration of the plans of "the fierce Nazi chiefs" in the ears of a nation too often inclined to credit others with its own peaceful intentions, were remembered and now appreciated. He spelt virility, as did the Royal Navy itself.

Bases for examining neutral ships for contraband had been established at Weymouth and the Downs—off Deal—for Channel traffic, at Kirkwall for traffic using the northern routes, and the British lion had his paws on each end of the Mediterranean, at Gibraltar and Haifa. Neutral vessels bound for enemy territory, or for ports in neutral countries from where goods could conveniently be forwarded to enemy territory, were urgently advised by the British Admiralty to call voluntarily at one of these bases, or they would be liable to be diverted to them in cases where search at sea was inadequate or impracticable. Every endeavour, it was stated, would be made to expedite the passing through of neutral ships with the least possible delay or vexation. Without fanfare of trumpets, without loud boast or barrage of lies, the blockade of Germany had begun, the blockade which the enemy, with his land mentality and inability to learn from lessons of the past, would seem invariably to underestimate until too late—for him.

On the British side the results of Germany's attempts to blockade England were awaited with reasonable confidence. In 1914 Germany had been in possession of a great battle fleet, nearly two-thirds as strong as that of Great Britain, which had then made her a real menace over actual command of the sea. At the beginning of 1939 this was no longer the case. Moreover, depth charges, whose invention was brought into use in the year 1916, the convoy system, which was not brought into force until as late as 1917, listening and other technical devices could be put into operation at once, or almost at once in the case of the convoy system. The huge Grand Fleet of 1914-18 had, too, necessitated the formation of a large number of destroyer flotillas to attend it; a large proportion of the equivalent number of destroyers could now, in 1939, be put solely on to anti-submarine work. On the other hand, submarines themselves had not become so very much more formidable since 1918, because the bigger a submarine is, the less easily is she handled and the easier a target she becomes to hunting craft.

On the debit side, Italy's strong fleet, which had necessitated a number of British capital ships being kept out in the Mediterranean during and after the Abyssinian operations, could not be ignored. With Italy staying her hand, however, with France's large and efficient Navy based on the Western Mediterranean, and with Turkey friend instead of foe, the situation out there did not give cause for great or immediate anxiety.

Germany began the present war at sea very much where she left off the last by, except in a few cases where more humane commanders were in charge, torpedoing British merchant vessels without warning. Of approximately sixty submarines she had ready for service at the outbreak, a good proportion were ready at their stations on the high seas on September 3rd, a fact which showed that Germany's previously declared peaceful intentions towards Great Britain were in keeping with other Nazi pronouncements.

Her machinery having started immediately, and Britain's only gathering way—Mr. Churchill had stated that the convoy system would take a short time to put properly into operation—the losses of the British mercantile marine for the first fortnight of the war were admittedly severe, consisting as they did of twenty-one vessels, totalling 122,000 tons. One of the first to be lost, a loss promising wide international repercussions, was the 13,000-ton Donaldson liner *Athenia*, carrying 1,400 passengers, including 300 American citizens, and bound from Glasgow for Montreal and New York. The ship sank with the loss of 128 lives, 600 survivors

being picked up by two British destroyers, 430 by the Norwegian tanker *Knut Nelson*, 236 by the U.S. ship *City of Flint*, which was shortly to figure in the news again, and a few by a Swedish yacht. Those rescued by the destroyers were taken to the Clyde for Glasgow, those by the *Knut Nelson* to the coast of Galway, while those in the *City of Flint* continued on their interrupted journey westwards. As the 430 survivors were landed from the *Knut Nelson*, many of them injured or suffering from exposure, the inhabitants of Eire, as they stood on that bleak coast with warm food and clothing and stretchers, can hardly have been nursing pro-German feelings.

The captain of the *Athenia* stated that no doubt existed whatever that the ship was torpedoed. The passengers were at dinner when the torpedo, which was fired from a distance of about 1,000 yards, struck the ship, killing several of the passengers and going right through to the engine-room. The submarine then rose to the surface and fired a shell from its gun, aimed apparently at the destruction of the wireless equipment, but it missed its mark.

On September 13th the 216 survivors rescued by the *City of Flint* were landed at Halifax. In spite of the manifold kindnesses heaped upon them by the crew of that vessel, owing to overcrowding they had suffered considerable unavoidable hardships, and indeed food was running short until the arrival of a United States coastguard cutter with supplies in mid-ocean relieved the situation. There were incongruous sights when the survivors landed, some being in evening dress, others in canvas garments made by the crew. They were unanimous that it was a German submarine which had fired the torpedo, the submarine having been seen quite plainly as it cruised round the sinking *Athenia*. A storm of indignation swept through the United States, and protests at this wanton action were made by Washington to the German Government. The Nazi Press, however, had persisted from the beginning that, if Mr. Winston Churchill's hand had not actually guided the torpedo, his was the diabolical mind which had caused the order to be given to the British submarine commander to deal the fatal blow, the motive being to put the blame on an innocent German U-boat and thus to drag the United States into the war on the side of the Allies. Here, or so shouted the Nazi Press, was yet another instance of the wily machinations of perfidious Albion. The United States, however, showed singular obtuseness in that, accustomed though they might be to tall stories, they wholly failed to believe this one, and their Government promptly chartered the liner *Orizaba* and sent her to the

Clyde to bring back the 150 American citizens who had been among the 600 survivors taken to Glasgow. The ship made her return journey safely, and was taking no chances, the United States flag being painted on deck and sides, and the ship herself being floodlit at night.

In the three days following the loss of the *Athenia* there were sunk, amongst others, the British ships *Bosnia*, 2,400 tons, *Royal Sceptre*, 4,800 tons, *Manaar*, 7,000 tons, *Olive Grove*, 4,000 tons, and *Magdapur*, 8,600 tons. The crew of the *Bosnia*, which was sunk off the Portuguese Coast, were landed in Lisbon, the captain carrying his binoculars, the only possession left him. Great gallantry was displayed by the wireless operator of the *Manaar* in helping wounded Lascars into the boats while the submarine was still shelling the ship. Of the *Olive Grove*, it is recorded that one of the crew was able to bring ashore in safety his pet canary. The *Magdapur*, which was torpedoed in the North Sea, sank in full sight of holiday-makers in an English coastal town, the town's A.R.P. services being mobilized to deal with the injured and help the survivors in general. Nothing was heard of the crew of the *Royal Sceptre*, numbering thirty-three, including the captain, for close on three weeks, and they were officially given up as lost. On September 27th, however, the British freighter *Browning* arrived at Bahia in Brazil with the whole crew. The *Royal Sceptre*'s boats had been picked up by the *Browning* near Madeira, but the captain of the latter vessel had not reported the rescue by wireless for fear of giving his position away, and had continued on his course westwards to Brazil. The sole casualty was the captain of the *Royal Sceptre*, who had been killed during the encounter with the submarine.

Once again in Britain's island story British seamen were facing dangers that might well have caused the stoutest heart to quail ; they were armed by long years of training and experience against the dangers of storm and tempest : unarmed, save for their own cool courage, against a slinking death beneath the seas. Yet there was no shirking, no complaining. On September 11th, H.M. the King sent a message to the President of the Board of Trade expressing to all officers and men in the Merchant Navy and the fishing fleets his appreciation of their unflinching determination to play their vital part in defence. " You have a long and glorious history," were his inspiring words.

Four days after the outbreak of war the newly formed Ministry of Information announced that fifty-four German ships were sheltering in the port of Vigo, on the north-west coast of Spain. International law requires, in time of hostilities, the war vessels of a belligerent country



CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF
ADMIRAL SIR DUDLEY A. POUND



COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE HOME FLEET
ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES MORETON FORBES
COMMANDERS OF THE ROYAL NAVY



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
STATION
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ANDREW CUNNINGHAM

to leave neutral ports within twenty-four hours, provided they are seaworthy. Failure to do so means internment for the remainder of hostilities. The *merchant* vessels of a belligerent country may, however, remain in neutral ports for an indefinite period, leaving when and how they like. The sole reason for the fifty-four German ships remaining in Vigo was that, should they put out to sea, they would promptly fall into the hands of the British Navy. Speculation was rife concerning the fate of the 51,700-ton *Bremen*, Germany's crack liner, which had left New York three days after war broke out and had not been heard of since. The various rumours concerning her were not dispelled until September 27th, when it was learnt that she had reached the Russian port of Murmansk, in the Arctic Circle, by taking an extreme northerly route. Ill-informed critics were not slow in coming forward with sharp censure on the Royal Navy for allowing such a prize, a large prize they were careful to point out, to slip through its fingers. A glance at a child's atlas, however, would have informed them that, big as the *Bremen* undoubtedly was, the Northern Atlantic and Arctic Oceans were very much bigger, consisting as they do literally of millions of square miles of heaving ocean wrapped for a great part of the year in storm and mist and darkness. They omitted also to consider the fact that the dispatch of a vast number of ships for the rounding up of one inoffensive unit would gravely have imperilled more vital operations nearer home.

After dealing with Germany's mercantile losses, the Ministry of Information then turned to enemy submarines. Active operations against these craft had been in progress with good results, but the exact number sunk could not always be promulgated, since to inform the enemy of the exact progress of the rate at which his vessels were going to the bottom would be obviously to his advantage.

On September 15th the Belgian steamer *Alex Van Opstal*, 6,000 tons, was sunk off Shambles Lightship, near Weymouth, either through mine or torpedo, the cause not being clear. The ship belonged to the Maritime Belge, and was one of the most modern of the Belgian cargo boats running between Antwerp and New York. On the same day the Fleetwood trawler *Rudyard Kipling* was sunk by a submarine, the German commander, a humane officer, taking the crew of thirteen on board and the ship's lifeboats in tow. The crew were given warm food and clothing, then placed in their boats five miles from land, which they reached safely. Another Fleetwood trawler, the *Davana*, was shelled for half an hour by a submarine, the crew taking to their boats and being rescued in an

exhausted condition. A further instance of humane conduct occurred when the trawler *Alvis* was stopped by a submarine, the crew of the latter contenting themselves with smashing the trawler's wireless equipment and cutting away the fishing gear on seeing that her lifeboat was unseaworthy. The commander also presented the trawler's crew with the somewhat unexpected present of a bottle of gin.

On September 16th the German Grand Admiral Raeder, in an interview granted to the Berlin correspondent of a neutral paper, stated that the difference between the 1939 war at sea and that of 1914 was mainly one of technical improvements. The Russian submarine fleet, he went on to say, was in perfect fighting condition. On September 18th, Russia invaded Poland. Comment would seem superfluous.

So far the tale had been one mainly of British losses. Since the British were keeping the sea, with the Germans, save for their submarines, in the main keeping in their harbours, this was wellnigh inevitable, and the nation had been warned to expect, and was expecting, hard knocks. A harder one was to come when, on September 17th, H.M. aircraft carrier *Courageous*, of 22,500 tons, was torpedoed and sunk with the loss of over five hundred lives out of a complement of twelve hundred officers and men. In September 1914, twenty-five years before, the then old cruisers *Aboukir*, *Hogue*, and *Cressy* had been torpedoed and sunk with the loss of several hundreds of lives, and to those in charge at the Admiralty September must have seemed a month of ill-omen. The *Courageous* had originally been built, during the war 1914-18, as a sort of super-fast heavy cruiser, but after the conclusion of that war her heavy guns had been taken out of her and she had been converted into an aircraft carrier. Mr. Churchill announced in the House of Commons that the ship was turning into the wind to receive one of her homing aeroplanes when the enemy submarine made her attack. She had been provided with an escort of four destroyers, but two at that immediate time were away after another U-boat reported to be attacking a merchant vessel, and owing to this combination of circumstances what Mr. Churchill described as the hundredth chance came off. It was on a Sunday evening, when it was growing dark, that the torpedoes struck. One officer survivor stated that he was having dinner in the ward-room when two explosions occurred one after another, there was a crash of breaking crockery, and the lights went out. He left the ward-room, climbed on to the flight deck, stripped down, and on the order "Abandon ship" dived into the sea, where he was picked up by a destroyer's boat after swimming about for three-quarters of an



H.M.S. COURAGEOUS

THIS FAMOUS BRITISH AIRCRAFT CARRIER WAS SUNK IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE WAR WITH THE LOSS OF MANY LIVES

hour. The youngest member of the ship, a bugler aged fifteen, stated that he went down over the starboard side and struck out for one of the ship's rafts he saw floating near by. This he reached, and the raft, after an hour's paddling, reached one of the rescuing destroyers. There was no panic whatever, and many individual acts of bravery were recorded. A petty officer of a destroyer, for instance, dived no fewer than ten times from his ship, swimming to men who were exhausted and holding them up till help arrived. The captain of the *Courageous*, Captain Makeig-Jones, R.N., was last seen on the bridge, going down with his ship. It was thought at the time that the submarine making the attack had been destroyed, but the German Admiralty denied this, and for once they were apparently stating the truth, as on September 28th the commander of the U-boat concerned, or one who passed for him, made a broadcast to the German nation in which he described the successful attack on the aircraft carrier. The two destroyers who attacked him dropped depth charges so close, he stated, that the electric lights in the submarine were torn from their sockets by the explosions ; no vital damage was, however, done.

The first three weeks of the war of 1939 had provided a series of events that in themselves could hardly be described as heartening for the Allied cause. They were the price of Admiralty. That the price was not excessive could be gauged by the fact that the unseen but relentless economic blockade of Germany was continuing uninterrupted : that from north to south, from east to west, British ships were still going about their lawful business, as many as six thousand vessels being daily at sea : that it had not been thought necessary to bring in even a modified form of food rationing as yet in the British Isles : that an Expeditionary Force had been convoyed to France without the loss of a man or gun : and, finally, that the Fleet itself was very much in being. Now the events themselves were to take on a brighter hue. So far the British public had been obliged to remain content with statements from the Ministry of Information or House of Commons, such as, " A number of enemy submarines have been destroyed," always an unsatisfactory though perhaps necessary diet. Three days after the sinking of the *Courageous* the Admiralty felt that no useful purpose would be served if the news was not unfolded that at least nine enemy submarines had been destroyed by the British and French Navies, and that over 200,000 tons of goods destined for Germany had been detained. Two of these two hundred thousand tons consisted, apparently, of coffee destined for none other than the Leader of the

German nation himself, the coffee, contained in twenty bags, being consigned from Aden to Hamburg and addressed to His Excellency Herr Hitler ; the freight had been paid.

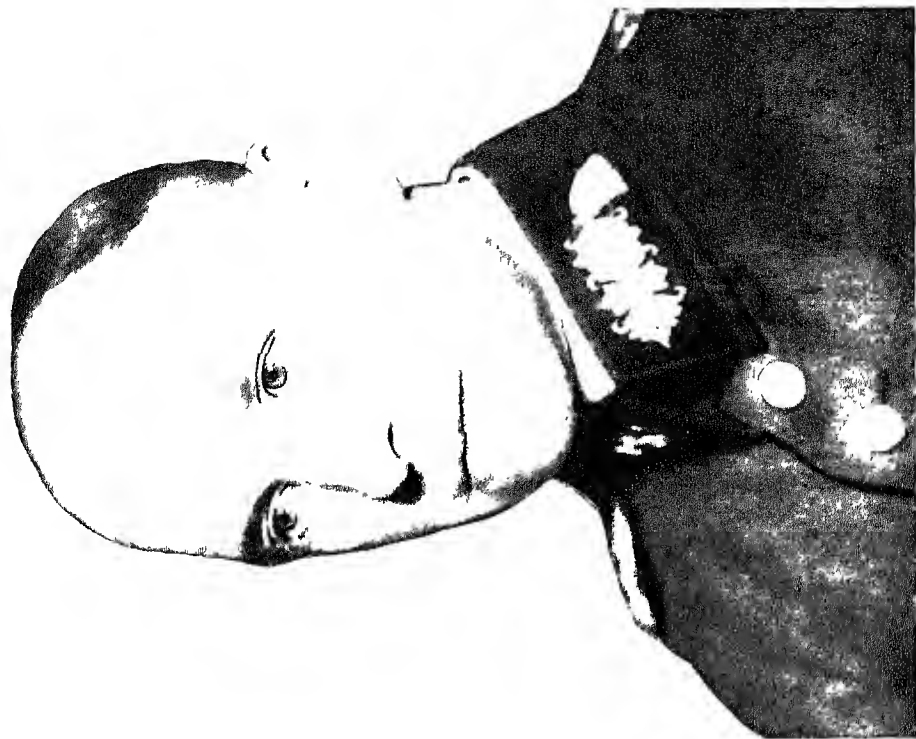
As already hinted at by Grand Admiral Raeder, the shadows of war now began to darken Baltic waters. On September 19th it was reported from Helsinki that the Soviet Government was taking naval measures in that sea, owing to the presence of Polish submarines in Baltic ports. The presence of such submarines was promptly denied by the Estonian and Latvian Governments so far as their own ports were concerned. Two days later the Soviet Government informed the Finnish Legation that minefields had been laid at the entrance to Kronstadt naval base, the reasons for the Soviet considering an attack on Kronstadt possible not being given. Both Kronstadt and Leningrad are within twenty-five miles of the Finnish coast. Russia was putting her schemes into motion. How Germany, who had already laid mines south of the Sound, between Sweden and Denmark, with the object of closing the Baltic to British ships, would view this renewed interest on the part of Russia in a sea she, Germany, had always regarded as her own, remained a matter for conjecture.

On September 18th the first case occurred of the rescue of a sunken ship's crew by air. The British steamer *Kensington Court*, bound from the Argentine for Birkenhead, was shelled by a submarine when nearing the British coast, and after sending out an S.O.S. the captain ordered the crew, numbering thirty-four, including the officers, to take to the boats. One of the boats unfortunately capsized on being lowered, with the result that the thirty-four men were bundled into one boat. The sea being extremely choppy, matters would have gone badly for them but for the arrival of two flying-boats sent out in response to the S.O.S. The aircraft landed in the water near by, and in spite of the roughness of the sea the shipwrecked crew were ferried over in the rescuers' collapsible rubber dinghies and then flown to safety. The airmen concerned in this feat were subsequently decorated by H.M. the King.

Another unusual adventure happened on the same day to the crew of a British trawler. Whilst steaming in a gale of wind she sighted two British warships and an aeroplane, the warships informing her they were after a German submarine reported in the vicinity and advising her to proceed at full speed away from the area. Whilst doing this a terrific crash suddenly lifted the bows of the trawler. The crash was repeated amidships, then aft, the crew who were not on deck at the time racing up from below in



ADMIRAL RAEDER
COMMANDERS-IN CHIEF OF THE GERMAN NAVY AND ARMY



GENERAL VON BRAUCHITSCH

the belief that the vessel had been torpedoed. So tremendous were the impacts that from full speed ahead the trawler was brought up standing. On looking aft bubbles and oil were seen rising to the surface, and on the ship dry-docking on reaching port her propeller was found to be damaged ; there could be little doubt that the trawler had accidentally rammed and sunk the submarine for which the warships were searching. German submarines had been known before now to discharge oil, even seamen's hats, to the surface with a view to their attackers presuming them destroyed and abandoning the chase—they had practised this in the war 1914-18—but the evidence of the damaged propeller and the shocks was overwhelming. The ruse referred to was, incidentally, apt more often than not to prove a boomerang, in that it showed attacking vessels that their prey, whether damaged or not, was there on the spot, thereby causing them to drop extra depth charges to make sure.

On September 20th the British patrol ship *Kittiwake* struck a mine in the English Channel. She sustained several casualties, but made harbour safely.

German submarines were now reported to be cruising in Mexican waters, one being seen near Coatzacoalcas, which, significantly, is the oil port of the Tehuantepec Isthmus. President Roosevelt also announced that foreign submarines had been sighted off the New England coast, and that swarms of small craft would immediately be placed on patrol.

On September 26th the First Lord of the Admiralty brought more reassuring news to the House. He said that the mercantile losses in the first and worst week of the War of 1939 had amounted to half those incurred in the worst week of April 1917, the peak period of the 1914-18 sinkings, but that since then they had been dropping rapidly, as illustrated by the fact that the first week's losses were 65,000 tons, the second 46,000 tons, and the third 21,000 tons. It was estimated that one-quarter, and possibly as much as one third, of the U-boats operating at the outbreak of hostilities had been destroyed. Where before, Mr. Churchill stated, it had taken fifteen to twenty vessels to hunt one U-boat, with the modern devices and inventions now in use two destroyers, or even one, could do the same, with the result that at least five times as many attacks were being made on submarines as in the previous war over the same period of time. This in itself would greatly sap the morale of the U-boats' crews. Mr. Churchill went on to state that three times as many anti-submarine craft would be in operation by the end of October as there were at the moment. Sixty-seven thousand more tons of German merchandise

had been converted to British use than had been lost in British ships. Added to this, over 2 million tons of German shipping were lying idle, either in their own or neutral ports.

That Germany herself was beginning to feel that her campaign to bring England to her knees was failing was illustrated on September 23rd by the first deliberate sinking of neutral vessels, two small Finnish steamers on their way to England laden with cellulose being stopped and sent to the bottom. The captains of these vessels protested to the German submarine commanders that cellulose was not listed as contraband, but no notice was taken of this, and the ships were sunk with dynamite, the use of torpedoes being considered too expensive. Following the Finnish ships, a Swedish steamer, also carrying cellulose, was torpedoed. Three of Norway's ships next met the same fate. "Leave England alone, or we will sink you," was Germany's grim message to the *smaller*—we emphasize the word—of the neutral countries.

On the same day as Mr. Churchill made his reassuring pronouncement in the House of Commons, the first action in history took place between men-of-war at sea and squadrons of air bombers. At long last the pros and cons of the bomb *v.* battleship controversy were being put to the test, a controversy not unreminiscent of the gun *v.* torpedo argument so prevalent before the War of 1914-18. There had in those days been experts in plenty to prove that the torpedo, as fired either from submarine, torpedo-boat, or torpedo-boat destroyer, had doomed the big-gun capital ship. There had been experts who had argued that the big-gun ship still ruled the waves: that, as regards submarines, they would never be able successfully to attack a well-protected squadron of fast-moving battleships: and that, as regards torpedo-boats and destroyers, they would mainly cancel each other out on both sides. In point of fact, the big-gun school proved correct so far as the previous war was concerned, not one single British super-Dreadnought being lost by torpedo during the whole of the four years of hostilities; several of the older vessels were sunk in this manner, but not one battleship in any squadron of the Grand Fleet. Since then more experts had arisen to prove that the big ship, or medium-tonnaged one for that matter, was doomed by the new menace from the air. Of what avail was it to place multiple pom-poms on the decks of men-of-war, themselves moving platforms rendering aim difficult, when winged furies came hurtling out of the skies with bombs that would crash down through the ship into her vitals instead of hitting the thick side armour? That was their question.

The Royal Air Force had already made a daring and successful raid, on September 4th, on some German units at Kiel, inflicting heavy damage on at least one battleship and sustaining some losses, but the ships had been stationary targets and were not at sea. Now, however, when about one hundred and fifty miles off the Norwegian coast, a squadron of British capital ships, accompanied by an aircraft carrier and some cruisers and destroyers, were swooped upon by twenty German bombers, attacking in diving waves from a height of 12,000 feet. A furious anti-aircraft fire was directed against them, and, though not a single British ship sustained one hit, the enemy lost two of their number, one being shot down and the other forced down. One other machine was seen to be badly damaged before disappearing in the clouds. The Germans claimed that the *Ark Royal* had been sunk and a battleship badly damaged. This claim, particularly so far as the alleged sinking of the *Ark Royal* was concerned, they continued to reiterate time and again with a persistence that verged on monotony, their idea being that if you repeat a lie long enough it will come to be believed. This might apply to the forced-to-be-unthinking millions in their own country ; it did not apply to the remainder of the world. In British naval circles the result of the action was considered more than satisfactory.

The month of September closed with the following announcement from the German Government : " Several German submarines have been attacked by merchant ships in the past few days. Hitherto German submarines have observed international law by always warning merchant ships before attacking them. Now, however, Germany will have to retaliate by regarding every vessel of the British Mercantile Marine as a warship." In November 1936 Germany signed a submarine protocol which was to be binding for all time. This protocol provided that no warship, submarine or otherwise, was justified in sinking a merchant vessel unless the crew had been placed in safety, and that open boats could not be considered as places of safety unless in calm weather or close to land or to rescuing ships. Considering that in case after case Germany had already chosen to ignore the terms of this protocol by sinking ships without warning, the declaration referred to above seemed somewhat redundant ; it provided too yet another instance of Germany remaining faithful to her agreements only so long as it suited her immediate needs ; the qualification " immediate " is inserted because she has never yet been known to realize what might best serve her ultimate interests. As this announcement might precede a spasm of increased " frightfulness "

on the part of German submarines, the British Admiralty passed the message on to all British merchant vessels for their information.

By the end of the first month of war no doubt existed that the British Navy had got the upper hand of the U-boats. There would still be losses, but the losses of the enemy were heavy and becoming heavier; the attacks on neutrals and threats of increasingly brutal action provided better proof of this than any figures. "We will break their hearts," Mr. Churchill was to say, of the U-boat crews. Perhaps their hearts were by this time already broken. They might still function with Teutonic woodenness, but their courage, which they undoubtedly possessed, would be the courage of despair, and laughter had died in them, as it had died in the hearts of most of the German nation; their leader had killed laughter. One wonders what was in this man's thoughts when, on the 28th of the month, he paid a surprise visit to Wilhelmshaven, where he thanked the crews of returned U-boats for their exploits. Was he thinking of his own vain boast and glory, or of those for whom there was no return?

On October 2nd the Admiralty announced that the river gunboats on patrol service on the Yangtze River were being withdrawn for service elsewhere. These boats, some five in number, had been employed mainly for the protection of peaceful vessels against bandits and pirates; bigger and better bandits had, however, arisen in quarters far removed from heathen China, necessitating the transfer of these craft. On the following day the Prime Minister announced in the House of Commons the significant fact that to date not one single merchant ship had been lost in convoy; the losses had been entirely confined to scattered vessels, and amounted to 1.75 per cent. of the whole of the vessels entering or leaving ports in the United Kingdom in the latter part of September. Referring to the attack of German bombers on part of the British Fleet on September 26th, the Prime Minister stated that the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal*, "sublimely unconscious of rumours that she had been sunk," was carrying out her normal duties. In Newfoundland arrangements were being made to receive for the Royal Navy some thousands of men from the Newfoundland fishing fleets.

The first figures for contraband search at Weymouth were now published. Since the outbreak of the war there had been anchored there a daily average of twenty neutral vessels. A total of seventy-four ships, carrying 513,000 tons of cargo, had been examined, of which 99,300 tons had been seized, including iron ore, petrol, and wheat. Despite some delays, inevitable in the early days of a blockade, goodwill between the



A DEPTH CHARGE EXPLODES
A DESTROYER STEAMING AWAY AS A DEPTH CHARGE EXPLODES

British boarding officers and the captains of the neutral vessels had been very much in evidence, cases of obstruction being extremely rare. In particular, the captain whose cargo had included the two tons of coffee for the German leader was reported as having shown his papers with positive eagerness. Figures for the other contraband ports showed even greater activity.

Foiled in their immediate objective of sweeping British shipping off the seas, the U-boats in the beginning of October caused their campaign against neutral vessels to increase in severity, no less than twenty ships belonging to the Northern Powers being either sunk or taken into German ports within a week. In the case of the Swedish steamer *Gun*, the submarine commander endeavoured to force the Swedish captain to sign a declaration that the *Gun*'s cargo was not for Belgium, as was the case, but for Great Britain. This the captain refused to do. A sub-lieutenant of the submarine, together with two of the crew, then proceeded to threaten the *Gun*'s crew with revolvers and to rifle their cupboards. The ship was finally sunk with a torpedo. The Powers concerned made immediate protests to the German Government, Sweden announcing that her navy would patrol Swedish territorial waters in her own interests. The Greek steamer *Diamantis* was also amongst neutral ships sunk, being torpedoed off Land's End. The submarine picked up the crew, then with them cruised along the south coast of Ireland, seeking a safe and deserted spot where they could be landed. Finally, near Dingle, Co. Kerry, at a spot not far from where Sir Roger Casement landed from a German submarine in the War of 1914, the Greeks were sent ashore in one of the U-boat's collapsible boats, to land under the eyes of the amazed but powerless Civic Guard.

This period showed a further striking reduction in the number of British ships sunk, the figure of 65,000 tons for the first week of the war being reduced to less than 6,000 for the fifth week. The First Lord of the Admiralty, after stating this in the House of Commons, then pointed out that, what with the capture of German vessels, which, after sheltering in neutral ports, had been trying to dash home, plus the additions turned out from British shipyards, there was actually a balance on the credit side for the period in question.

On October 5th the world learnt there had been signed the Soviet-Latvian pact granting the Soviet the right to establish naval and air bases in certain Latvian ports. A similar treaty, between the Soviet and Lithuania, was signed six days later. A treaty between the Soviet

and Estonia was already in existence, and Finland now stood out in valiant isolation. More and more the Russian bear was scooping up the Baltic in its hairy paws, causing the German naval chiefs—though possibly not their political leaders—to stir uneasily in their beds. The word “beds” is used advisedly, because for the most part the officers and crews of German men-of-war sleep ashore in houses and barracks whilst in their home ports, the ships themselves being designed, in order to attain a maximum amount of fighting efficiency, with a minimum amount of space and comfort in the living quarters. British ships have not this advantage, because, since they have to cover the oceans of a great part of the globe, attention must of necessity be paid to the living conditions of their crews.

On October 7th and 8th His Majesty the King visited the Home Fleet at a northern base, his first visit since the outbreak of war. He inspected the officers and crews of different units, including those of armed merchant cruisers on the Northern patrol.

After the attacks on harmless neutral vessels which occurred at the beginning of the month, it is with relief that one is able to turn to certain legitimate warfare operations which took place on the 9th. A German naval squadron was sighted by British naval vessels off the coast of Norway, and though chase was given, the enemy escaped under cover of darkness. On the same day repeated actions took place between German bombing aeroplanes and British cruisers and destroyers, and one lone destroyer. In the case of the latter, while in a heavy sea, the destroyer sighted an enemy aeroplane and turned stern on to the sea the better to be able to fight her anti-aircraft guns. A level bombing attack was made at 5,000 feet, one bomb bursting about 400 yards to starboard of her. A second and larger aeroplane then made a similar attack, dropping three large bombs, all of which fell very wide, as much as half a mile away. The second aeroplane was probably hit by the destroyer's guns. In the case of the cruisers the attacks on them lasted no less than five hours, over one hundred bombs being dropped without one hit or a single casualty on or in the British ships. Of the attackers, however, six planes were lost to Germany, either through their coming down in the North Sea or on neutral territory. The German authorities so far forgot themselves as to admit these losses, but amended matters somewhat by claiming ten direct hits on their targets. These actions provided yet further instance of the permanence of British sea-power; time and again in England's sea story new and dire perils had risen in

horrid threat ; time and again, thanks to minds both alert and courageous, they had been countered.

Further successful action was to come. On Friday, October 13th—uneasy date—no less than four U-boats, including two of the latest big ocean-going type, were sunk, and seven in that one week. Such a tremendous rate of destruction had never been attained during the War of 1914, and when it is considered that it takes a minimum of three years properly to train a submarine's crew, the outlook for the U-boats appeared stormy. The Germans countered these successes by awarding the Iron Crosses of the First and Second Class upon one of their airmen for "sinking" the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal*. The airman also received a personal letter of congratulation from none other than Field-Marshal Goering. It is not known whether, in addition, he received the congratulations of the officers and men of the *Ark Royal* herself!

On October 11th the Admiralty issued instructions that in future, for the duration of hostilities, seamen's caps would merely bear on the ribbons the letters H.M.S., and not the name of the ship, this for the sake of secrecy. It was also announced that three Polish destroyers which had escaped from the Baltic earlier on had been operating successfully in the Channel with the British Navy.

War consists of measure and counter-measure, of thrust and parry. Over-confidence, or any tendency thereto, on the part of the British public was to be rudely shattered by the loss on October 14th of the 29,000-ton battleship *Royal Oak*. She had an armament of eight fifteen-inch and twelve six-inch guns, and had fought at the battle of Jutland twenty-three years previously next to Admiral Jellicoe's flagship, *Iron Duke*. Details were not promulgated for two days, whereupon it was revealed that she had been sunk whilst at anchor in Scapa Flow by an exceptionally daring U-boat which had penetrated the defences. *Royal Oak* was first hit in the bow by a single torpedo at 1.20 a.m., whereupon the Rear-Admiral in her and her captain at once went forward to investigate the cause of the explosion. A torpedo on striking a ship often gives forth only a muffled detonation which might well be ascribed to other causes ; this, together with the fact that the anchorage, owing to net barrages, booms, blockships, patrol craft, and strongly flowing currents, was considered to all intents and purposes impregnable—not one single enemy submarine had succeeded in entering during the whole of the War of 1914—can hardly have helped the officers in charge immediately to grasp the wellnigh incredible truth—that a submarine

was attacking them. It was while they were carrying out their investigations that a salvo of three or four more torpedoes hit the ship, whereupon she capsized and sank with the loss of over eight hundred lives out of a complement of twelve hundred, the Rear-Admiral going down with her. That the loss of life was so heavy was attributable to several causes : to the darkness and cold : to the fact that the ship was at the extreme end of the anchorage—Scapa Flow is not a harbour : to a large number of the crew being below armour, as at first an air raid was suspected : and to the number of torpedoes, four if not five, which hit her and caused her to sink rapidly. The survivors spoke of being much hampered by the coating of thick oil which covered the waters. Some, after swimming about for a considerable time, gained some cliffs, up which they climbed, to collapse with exhaustion at the top.

On October 17th the commander of the submarine concerned in the exploit reached Germany in safety and was decorated with the Iron Cross. He claimed the sinking of the battleship *Repulse* as well as the *Royal Oak* ; this was unfounded. On the British side the loss of the *Royal Oak* in an anchorage which, if it had been safe in the years 1914-18, should have been doubly safe in 1939, caused a good deal of not ill-founded criticism. On November 8th the First Lord of the Admiralty admitted in the House of Commons that the defences had not, at the outbreak of war, been in the state of efficiency they should have been, and he said that measures had been taken, and were being taken, to rectify this. The last blockship required only reached Scapa Flow the day after the disaster.

The German Air Force now, on October 16th, made its reappearance on the naval scene by attacking with fourteen aeroplanes British ships in the Firth of Forth and attempting to bomb the Forth Bridge. One bomb glanced off the cruiser *Southampton*, causing slight damage near her bow and sinking the admiral's barge and pinnacle which were alongside her. She sustained three casualties. A few casualties also occurred in the cruiser *Edinburgh* through bomb splinters, though there was no direct hit. The worst to fare was the destroyer *Mohawk*, which was attacked while on her way back up the Firth of Forth from convoy escort duty in the North Sea. One bomb fell close to her, causing twenty-five casualties, amongst whom were her captain and first lieutenant. The captain, Commander Jolly, R.N., though severely wounded, refused to leave the bridge or to allow himself to be attended to, but continued to direct the *Mohawk* for the remaining thirty-five miles of the passage

home, which took an hour and twenty minutes to complete. His voice was so weak that his orders had to be passed on by another officer. Not till he had rung off the main engines and brought his ship safely into port did he collapse, death taking place shortly after he was landed. The path of Nelson had been nobly followed. The first lieutenant of the ship was also amongst those who laid down their lives that day. Of the attacking craft, four were shot down by anti-aircraft fire and Royal Air Force machines, and more probably failed to make the long return journey to Germany.

Three days later four enemy aeroplanes visited Scapa Flow, slightly damaging the *Iron Duke*, Admiral Jellicoe's flagship at Jutland, and now a training and depot ship. No casualties were sustained. One of the bombers was shot down in flames. The German Air Force next turned its attention to a convoy of British merchant vessels in the North Sea, attacking it with three bombers at midday on October 21st. The aeroplanes dived down through low-lying clouds and mist and dropped several bombs, the vessels escorting the convoy firing on them furiously. After the first three had disappeared, three more flights of three arrived for the attack; by this time, however, Royal Air Force aeroplanes had put in an appearance in response to messages for help, and they promptly engaged the raiders, who flew off without dropping any bombs. Four were seen to crash, and three more came down before they reached Germany, making a loss of seven out of twelve, an extremely satisfactory result for the British. Some of the crews of three were picked up by a trawler, a destroyer, and a Danish vessel. No damage was done either to the convoy or to the escorting vessels. Some raids, similarly with no result from the point of view of the enemy, also took place on the Orkneys and Shetlands Islands about this time. Meanwhile, two successful attacks by British aeroplanes on U-boats were recorded, one in the North Sea and one in the Atlantic, both U-boats being sunk with bombs. On the same day, the 21st, the German mine-patrol vessel S.T. 701 struck a German mine a few miles off the Danish island of Moen in a rough sea and sank immediately, only five out of a crew of seventy-five escaping with their lives.

To return to the melancholy but unavoidable losses of merchant vessels. Driven by British and French measures to a large extent from the narrower seas, German submarines now turned to the wider spaces of the Atlantic, and in the third week of October were successful in sinking

the good-sized vessels *Louisiane*, 7,000 tons, *Bretagne*, 10,000 tons, *Lochavon*, 9,000 tons, *Yorkshire*, 10,000 tons, and *City of Mandalay*, 7,000 tons, the first two named being French, the remainder British. The *Bretagne*, a passenger vessel, was shelled before being sunk, the shells being fired as her boats were lowered into the water, several women and children being injured and thrown into the sea. Five of the crew were killed and two of the passengers. A few hours later the submarine herself was destroyed by a French man-of-war, some of the crew being rescued and taken prisoners. Piteous scenes were also witnessed when the *Yorkshire*, a Bibby liner plying between Rangoon and the United Kingdom and famous for providing, among other amenities, her passengers with the opportunity for games of skittles on her unusually long and level fo'c'sle, was sunk with the loss of fifty-eight souls, including seven women and ten children. The *City of Mandalay* was sunk while attempting to rescue the *Yorkshire* survivors, and had it not been for the arrival of the United States ship *Independence Hall* in response to the S.O.S. the death roll would have been far greater. Three hundred were picked up from both sunk vessels by this latter ship, which continued on her journey westwards, arriving in New York on October 19th. Passengers of the *Independence Hall* stated on arrival there that the rescue work had taken over two hours, and spoke of scenes too harrowing to relate in this chronicle.

From a purely material point of view, a sense of proportion can be kept from learning that, despite and inclusive of these sinkings, the losses of the total of the British sailings for the week in question amounted only to half of 1 per cent.

On October 28th the Minister for Economic Warfare announced that in the first six weeks of the war Britain had seized as contraband 338,000 tons of goods, including 76,500 tons of petroleum products, 65,000 tons of iron ore, 38,500 tons of manganese ore, 24,500 tons of phosphates, 21,500 tons of aluminium ore, 16,500 tons of hematite ore, 13,000 tons of copra, and 10,000 tons of oil seeds. The two tons of coffee consigned to the leader of the German nation must also not be forgotten. In retaliation the German Admiralty announced that they had sent nearly half a million tons of British shipping to the bottom at the expense of three submarines, which, having failed to return, could be presumed lost. Thirty would have been very much nearer the truth than three. Of these, one was found on October 27th, wrecked and abandoned on the Goodwin Sands, a somewhat unusual discovery. After investigation the

British Admiralty came to the conclusion that, owing to damage by depth charge or other means, the German crew had decided to scuttle their vessel and take to their collapsible boats. The submarine, after sinking, had then been bumped along the sea-bed by the currents until brought up short on the Goodwins, where low tide had exposed her. Nothing was ever heard of the crew, though the bodies of several German seamen were later washed up on the coast near Folkestone.

The pocket battleship *Deutschland* now sprang into front-page news through the seizure of the United States ship *City of Flint*, already referred to as having picked up survivors from the torpedoed *Athenia*. On September 30th the British steamer *Clement* was sunk off the Brazilian coast by what was at first believed to be another pocket battleship, the *Admiral Scheer*, but which later turned out to be the *Graf Spee*. Three days later, on October 5th, the British steamer *Stonegate* was stopped and sunk by the *Deutschland*, also in the Atlantic. The *Deutschland* then proceeded to stop the U.S. *City of Flint*, and on the alleged grounds that she was carrying contraband—she was on her way back from America to England with grain, fruit, hides, wax, and 4,000 tons of tractors—the German battleship sent a prize crew of eighteen German seamen over to her, together with the thirty-eight British crew taken from the *Stonegate*. On October 24th this curious hybrid vessel, American by crew, ownership, and registration, but with armed German naval seamen in charge and with thirty-eight British prisoners in her lazaret, arrived at the Norwegian port of Tromsø in the far North, on the pretext of taking in water. The Norwegian authorities ordered her to leave within forty-eight hours to comply with international law, the point being that as she was sailing under the orders of the German naval prize crew, she was to all intents and purposes a belligerent vessel. The American crew of the *City of Flint*, together with the British seamen from the *Stonegate*, were then landed at Tromsø, the ship herself going on with the prize crew on board to the Russian port of Murmansk, where the authorities detained her.

Confusion now became worse confounded, and for once England was able to sit back and with folded arms watch a maritime controversy which did not concern her interests, the British crew of the *Stonegate* being safely in Tromsø and awaiting the first vessel bound from there to England. The United States Government sent strong protests both to the German and Russian Governments, to the former for seizing the ship in the first place, to the latter for detaining her at Murmansk. The Russians eventually escaped from their dilemma by sending the *City of*

Flint back to Tromso, where the Norwegian authorities interned the German prize crew and restored the ship to its rightful American crew. Thus the incident closed satisfactorily to all parties save to Germany, who complained to Norway of a "very unfriendly act."

The British crew of the *Stonegate* arrived back in Great Britain on October 30th. They stated that a heavy sea was running when, on October 5th, the *Deutschland* hove in sight, stopped them, and told them to take to the boats. Owing to the roughness of the sea, it became evident that the boats could not live for long, so the men were taken on board the battleship. They had no complaints to make concerning their treatment during the five days they were in her, and on the 10th they were sent over to the U.S. *City of Flint*, together with the German prize crew, who were heavily armed with rifles, revolvers, and hand grenades. During the passage to Tromso they were treated extremely harshly, being herded together in the lazaret beneath the poop in indescribable conditions, and being told by their guards that if they left their place of imprisonment for one instant hand grenades would be thrown at them. The rightful American crew did, however, everything they could for them.

It had been suspected since the end of September that German raiders of the pocket-battleship class were operating in the Atlantic, and though details were not made public, Britain's far-flung Navy had not been idle. But the stretches of the scene are vast and a battleship one tiny speck in immensity, and weeks, perhaps months, might well clapse before one or more of the raiders was hounded down. At the beginning of October the Pan-American Conference of Foreign Ministers in Panama, mindful of the possibility of naval battles taking place not far from the New World coasts, had accepted the proposals of the United States to establish and declare a "safety belt" extending three hundred miles out to sea along the South American and United States coasts. From this area all belligerent activities were to be outlawed. How this could be enforced over such a vast sea field was not made clear; the suggestion, and its acceptance, came, however, from a not unnatural desire on the part of these countries for their seas to be kept free of activities which might involve their own peaceful ships in danger or embarrassment.

During October there fell victims to the pocket battleship *Graf Spee*, on top of the *Clement* already referred to, the British ships *Newton Beach*, *Ashlea*, *Huntsman*, and *Trevanion*. All these were sunk while the raider was prowling south-westwards across the southern Atlantic in the direction of South Africa. These pocket battleships, which were limited

to a tonnage of 10,000 under the terms of the Versailles Treaty, were formidable vessels, with a speed of twenty-six knots—a very high speed for a battleship—thick armour, and an armament of six eleven-inch guns in two triple turrets and eight five-point-nine-inch guns. Their construction had involved a number of new and secret technical points which were jealously guarded. How these vessels would perform when in action against other armed and armoured men-of-war remained yet a matter for conjecture.

To leave the solitudes of the farther Atlantic for the narrower seas nearer home. On October 27th the trawler *St. Nidan* was sunk by a German submarine, the commander of the submarine taking the trawler's skipper on board and giving him a box of biscuits for him and his crew to eat while in their boats. The German commander informed him that it was not him or his crew he wanted, but the Prime Minister of England, who had begun the war which Germany was going to finish. Mr. Chamberlain not being on board the *St. Nidan*, the trawler was sunk and the U-boat submerged. Soon after this the *St. Nidan's* crew and the box of biscuits were picked up by the trawler *Lynx II*, whereupon the same submarine reappeared and sank her, the two crews taking to the boats of the *Lynx II* and the box of biscuits unfortunately being left behind in the hurry. Finally a third trawler rescued both crews and they were landed safely.

On October 29th the French Admiralty made the following announcement: "In the course of the first two months of the war, six French merchantmen, of a total tonnage of 41,000, were lost. During the same period we captured four ships, one of which, the German steamer *Halle*, of 5,900 tons, was sunk by her crew. The three others, whose tonnage totalled 19,000, are being used by us. Since the start of hostilities our merchant fleet has therefore been reduced by 22,000 tons, or about 1 per cent. of the total French sea-going traffic."

The month closed with an attack by a German seaplane on a British convoy off the Norfolk coast. Two bombs were dropped, but the convoy sustained no damage and the seaplane was driven off.

November opened with the repeal of the United States arms embargo provision of the Neutrality Bill. By sixty-seven to twenty-two votes the Senate had passed the repeal at the end of October, and on November 2nd the House of Representatives also passed it by two hundred and forty-two votes against one hundred and eighty-one. Two days later

President Roosevelt signed the amended Neutrality Bill. This provided that all United States products, including arms and ammunition, could be bought by any belligerent country provided that country paid for them in cash and took them away in her own ships. This was obviously favourable to the Allies, as, being in command of the sea, they could reap the benefit of it, while Germany could not, since her ships would be seized even were she in a financial position to make the necessary purchases. The amended Neutrality Bill also ruled that no American vessels would henceforth, for the duration of hostilities, be allowed to enter ports in the following zones: France, Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Norway north of Bergen, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and the Baltic. All ports in the Mediterranean were, however, to continue open for American shipping, as were those in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and in Africa south of the Canaries. It also decreed that no United States citizens should travel in vessels belonging to belligerent countries.

These drastic measures, taken by America herself for the protection of American ships and citizens and the avoidance of international complications, hit American shipping badly, causing the immediate cancellation of a large number of sailings and promising to throw several thousand of her seamen out of work. Indeed, proposals were put forward as to the possibility of transferring some American vessels, such as the eight ships belonging to the United States lines, to Panamanian registry, thereby giving rise to considerable legal and political argument. One of the last of American ships to sail in or from belligerent waters was the *President Harding*, which left England for New York on November 16th; there was an unprecedented demand for accommodation in her, her writing-room being fitted up as a dormitory.

On November 3rd the Danish ship *Canada*, 11,000 tons, was sunk in the North Sea, her crew being taken off by lifeboats while her decks were awash. It was first thought that a torpedo was the cause, but later the captain, at an inquiry held in Copenhagen, stated that he considered it was a mine. Two days later a most unusual encounter took place between a mine and a man in a bathing dress. A householder in an east-coast town, whose house had already suffered damage through a drifting mine exploding on the sea-wall, perceived in the evening another drifting mine approaching. Mindful of the proprieties, although it was growing dark, he slipped on a bathing dress, then plunged into the sea, swam out to the mine, and pushed it before him until it was clear of the sea-wall. He then beached it, where it could be rendered

harmless in comparative safety. Drifting mines were also at this time causing alarm to the inhabitants of towns on the east coast of Zealand, Denmark. They came from the German mine belt laid in the Sound between Sweden and Denmark, and numbered about a hundred. In connexion with this belt, Germany now informed Sweden that she, Germany, was laying mines to within three miles of the Swedish coast, this in spite of the fact that, owing to the shallowness of the water, Sweden had always considered a four-mile limit her rights.

On November 3rd three German seamen were picked up by a trawler off the Firth of Forth. They were in the last stages of exhaustion, with only one tin of milk left as provisions, and explained that they came from a ship detained by the British for contraband. Fearing they would be interned, they had hidden in one of the ship's lifeboats and escaped. Their boat had been blown across the North Sea, then back again, capsizing on one occasion, but righting herself, and their survival was wellnigh miraculous.

The week ended November 11th stood out as producing the lowest mercantile losses of the war, only two small vessels, one British and one Greek, being sunk. On November 8th Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons announced that during the first eight weeks of war the net loss of *British mercantile tonnage* was less than one-third of 1 per cent. As regards the naval tonnage which the Germans claimed to have sunk, Britain could, he stated, take on the whole of the German Navy with it. The cargo figures were as favourable as the mercantile tonnage, with captures and losses showing a balance of over 100,000 tons in Britain's favour. The losses of U-boats were between two and four a week, and at the German rate of building probably a hundred would have to be faced in January 1940, less those destroyed. After dealing with the details concerning the loss of H.M.S. *Royal Oak*, already referred to, he revealed that H.M. Submarine *Oxley* had been destroyed earlier on in the war by an accidental explosion in circumstances it was not deemed advisable to make public. He concluded with a striking tribute to the French Navy.

On the same day the Contraband Committee reported that during the week ended November 4th, 19,500 tons of goods destined for Germany had been detained, totalling for the first nine weeks of the war 420,500 tons. One hundred and thirty-seven new cases, plus 77 outstanding cases from the previous week, were dealt with. It was also learnt that amongst the seizures to date were no less than 12 million gallons of

petrol destined for Germany. The British public leapt upon this figure with avidity. The seizure of oil seeds, of hematite ore, of manganese ore, though doubtless very satisfactory, was a little vague, a little puzzling. But here, in the shape of 12 million gallons of petrol, was something the man in the street could understand and appreciate.

The loss of H.M. Auxiliary Vessel *Northern Rover*, overdue and presumed lost with all hands, was announced by the Admiralty on November 11th. On the following day the British India *Sirdhana*, 7,700 tons, sank three miles outside the Singapore port limits with the loss of eleven Asiatic deck passengers, chiefly children. The Court of Inquiry held subsequently found that the captain did not take adequate steps to ascertain the position of the British minefields, although the authorities had issued the necessary warnings. Thousands of people in Singapore heard the explosion and witnessed the sinking of the ship.

By now some of the numerous German merchant vessels sheltering in neutral ports were beginning to fret. Not only were their cargoes urgently required in Germany, but the ships themselves were piling up huge harbour dues which sooner or later would have to be met if they were to leave at all. Several decided to make a dash for it. The *Emmy Friedrich*, a German tanker of 4,300 tons, with the—for Germany—priceless cargo of oil, had scuttled herself at the end of October after being stopped by a British cruiser in the Caribbean Sea while on her way home from Tampico, and now the Admiralty announced that the German ships *Mecklenburg*, 8,000 tons, and *Parana*, 6,000 tons, had also been intercepted, and scuttled by their crews. The 7,600-ton *Uhenfels* tried to send herself to the bottom, but the British prize crew was able to stop this in time, and the ship was brought into Freetown as a prize. This scuttling of themselves on the part of merchant ships to avoid capture by the enemy provided precedent and was perfectly understandable. This does not, of course, refer to men-of-war. On the same day as the Admiralty announcement, it was given out by the Air Ministry that a reconnaissance aeroplane had bombed and sunk an enemy submarine.

Owing to the unrestricted submarine warfare many British merchant vessels had by this time been defensively armed with a stern gun and an anti-aircraft gun, and several cases were reported of ships warding off gun-fire attack—a submarine can only carry a limited number of the costly torpedoes—by forcing their enemies to dive to avoid damage, the fatal weakness of a submarine being that she has no water-line; even a shell bursting on her superstructure is liable to sink her when she submerges.

Of ships unarmed, Captain Roberts, of the *Mopan*, 5,400 tons, was awarded in mid-November the O.B.E. for his determined conduct immediately after the outbreak of the war. While on her way home from Jamaica with a cargo of bananas, the *Mopan* was attacked by gun-fire, the submarine opening fire at 4,000 yards. The captain at once brought the submarine astern by altering helm, and though the attacker's speed was sixteen knots on the surface and his own ship's normal speed only thirteen and a half, the *Mopan* succeeded in working up to sixteen and a half knots and left the submarine behind, the latter ceasing fire at 8,000 yards. On November 14th the German Press published a list of thirty British and six French "armed" liners, which justified German submarines—or so the Press alleged—sinking these ships without warning. The British Admiralty had, at the outbreak of war, converted certain liners into auxiliary, or armed merchant, cruisers, by giving them a *broadside* of guns and sailing them under the white ensign and naval discipline; these had become definite men-of-war and were to be treated as such. Not so, however, the liners and other vessels which, as already stated, had been *defensively* armed with stern gun and anti-aircraft gun only; these remained merchant vessels under private ownership, the reason for their carrying any weapons at all being the German submarines and aircraft themselves; thus, purposely no doubt, the German Press was confusing cause with effect.

On November 14th the Admiralty reported the loss of one of H.M. destroyers through striking a mine, the crew being picked up by fishing-boats and trawlers after sustaining twenty casualties. Survivors stated that the ship was slewing round at high speed when she was struck, the mine hitting her aft. The injured were carried up on to the fo'c'sle in case the ship should live. On the same day the trawler *Cresswell* was sunk, the survivors being very well treated by the U-boat commander concerned. A trawler also arrived at a British port with twenty-three survivors from the big Norwegian tanker *Arne Kiode*, 11,000 tons, which had been broken in two by torpedo explosion. The men had been adrift in stormy weather in an open boat for forty hours. The trawler reported that she had searched fruitlessly for another of the *Arne Kiode's* boats, which, according to the crew of the first boat, had contained the captain, already in a state of exhaustion through being on the bridge for thirty continuous hours before the ship was struck.

A further victim fell to the pocket battleship *Graf Spee* in the shape of the British steamer *Africa Shell*, which was stopped and sunk at the

beginning of the month in Portuguese East African waters off Zabora Point. The pilot of an aeroplane was the first to bring news of the sinking. Warnings were broadcast to all shipping from Lourenço Marques, and a black-out was imposed on all towns on the east coast of Africa under British control.

The war at sea now took on a new and grim phase. The Germans, recognizing the defeat for the time being of the U-boat campaign, had turned to indiscriminate mine-sowing, one of the first victims being, on November 18th, the Dutch liner *Simon Bolivar*, 8,300 tons, while in the North Sea on her way from Holland to the West Indies. The explosion lifted the bows out of the water, killing the captain on the bridge and several others, and the ship sank very quickly. Owing to the cant, only the starboard boats could be lowered, and eighty-six persons were lost in all. Two hundred and sixty-two survivors, many of them injured, were picked up by British destroyers and other light craft and landed at Harwich. Some were taken to local hospitals, the uninjured and less serious cases going on to London. The wireless operator said he tried to radio the S.O.S., but his instruments would not respond, the masts having been blown down, the power cut off, and the instruments themselves damaged beyond repair. A planter returning to his West Indies sugar estate said he was strolling on deck when the explosion occurred; when his senses cleared, two or three passengers not far from him were lying dead. He was able to find his wife and daughter, the daughter getting away in a boat. There was no room in the boat for his wife and him, and he was finally forced to jump, his wife being reluctant to do so because she could not swim. At last she jumped too, and he held her up until they were rescued by a trawler. The whole of Holland was deeply concerned at this new tragedy. She had now in all lost five ships through the war.

On the same day as the *Simon Bolivar* there were also lost through mines, and again in the North Sea, the seven following ships: the British *Blackhill*, 2,500 tons, *Torchbearer*, 1,250 tons, *Wigmore*, 350 tons, the Swedish *B.O. Borjesson*, 1,500 tons, the Italian *Grazia*, 5,800 tons, the Yugoslav *Carica Milicia*, 6,800 tons, and the Lithuanian *Kaunas*. Thirty-six lives were lost in these vessels, bringing, with the 86 lost in the *Simon Bolivar*, the total to 122. Other mine casualties off the east coast quickly followed, including the 11,900-ton Japanese liner *Terukuni Maru*, sunk on the 21st. The ship was doing fifteen knots when there

was a terrific explosion and her bows shot up, the engines being disabled and several hull plates broken. As she was not far from shore the pilot who was on board her suggested she should be beached, but as her engines were out of action this was not possible, and she sank, though slowly. All the crew and the passengers, to a total of over two hundred, were rescued and taken to London. On the same day the Italian steamer *Fianona*, 6,600 tons, was sunk by a mine off the south-east coast of England while bound for Rotterdam.

The mines that had caused all these casualties were laid by German submarines, two of which were believed to have met with disaster before they got back home. Two hundred of these mines broke from their moorings, owing to storms, and were washed ashore on the Yorkshire coast between November 20th and 24th. They were made in compliance with international law in so far as they were fitted with devices (which cannot always be relied upon to work) rendering them innocuous after breaking adrift; where the enemy had *not* complied with international law, however, was by laying minefields at all without notifying the danger zones as soon as they ceased to be under proper observation, and Britain was not slow in retaliation. As soon as November 21st, while ships were yet foundering, the Prime Minister announced in the House of Commons that, where before only imports for Germany had been seized, exports of German origin or ownership travelling in neutral ships would be liable to the same procedure. The French Government followed suit the next day. In order to cause as little vexation as possible to the already harassed neutrals, the Prime Minister stated that fourteen days' grace would be allowed before the order came into force.

The aim of this measure was to cause Germany loss by stifling her export trade at the expense of her credits abroad—"Germany must export or die." For instance, between January 1st and October 1st, 1939, more than 10 million tons of German goods were shipped from Rotterdam and Amsterdam alone. The measure admittedly dealt an unavoidable blow at neutrals, and Japan, Belgium, Denmark, and Holland were not slow in lodging protests to the British Government. In the case of Holland particularly much sympathy could be felt. She was literally between the devil and the deep sea. On land she had Germany growling at her back door; on sea her ships were being detained by the British, with resultant loss of trade, as well as being sunk by German mines, with the loss of life of some of her citizens. On November 30th the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs stated in the House of

Commons that all hardships possible would be spared neutral countries consistent with Britain's primary objective of exercising her belligerent rights, and thus bringing about the victory which alone could produce the peace so beneficial to neutrals themselves.

Mine damage at this time was not confined to merchant vessels, the British minesweepers *Mastiff* and *Aragonite* being sunk with casualties, and the destroyer *Gipsy* being damaged and beached with twenty casualties. On the very day this occurred the destroyer had rescued three German airmen found adrift in the North Sea in a collapsible boat. The new cruiser *Belfast*, which was launched in the town of her name in March 1938, was also damaged, but not sunk, in the Firth of Forth, twenty being injured. Alarm and damage were also occasioned in Belgium through mines drifting ashore on her coast, one exploding at Coxyde, damaging the embankment and breaking the windows of houses for a mile along the front. A whale also struck a mine and was washed ashore there.

On November 22nd the German Government, which had at the outset accused Britain of laying the mine which had sunk the *Simon Bolivar*, openly admitted that neutrals were being sunk by German action, and declared the British export reprisals would in turn be met with unrestricted mine warfare. They followed up their words by a new method of mine-laying, that of dropping light "magnetic" mines by parachute from seaplane. These magnetic mines were of a small but powerful type, needing no contact, but detonating through galvanic action; they could be laid on the bottom in shallow water without mooring ropes, and on November 22nd and 23rd German seaplanes were seen to fly over the Thames Estuary and drop objects; they were also sighted off the south-east coast. On November 23rd six more merchant vessels were sunk, four British, one French, and one Greek. On November 26th the crack Polish liner *Pilsudski*, 14,200 tons, under charter to the Royal Navy since the outbreak of the war and manned by a Polish crew, was also sunk. The Polish captain, who was injured by the explosion, refused to leave the ship till all the crew had been lowered in the boats, then dived into the sea and was helped to a raft. He died, however, before rescue craft arrived.

The following day the luckless Dutch incurred another heavy loss through the liner *Spaarndam*, 8,800 tons, being mined and sunk off the Thames Estuary, four of the crew and the only passenger, an old woman of seventy, being killed. Another victim was the British *Mangalore*,

8,800 tons, which was struck by a drifting mine while actually at anchor and sank in full sight of people ashore. The crew were saved, though some were injured.

The British Admiralty were quick to take counter-measures, one of which was to appeal for two hundred additional drifters to act as mine-sweepers, together with two thousand men to man them. In spite of the almost incredibly severe nature of the task, involving in turn hardships, monotony, and moments of dire, nerve-racking peril, the response was overwhelming. Again England was rising to the occasion because her heart was sound; sea warfare is won not only by glory and gun-fire, but by long days and nights of sheer endurance, and for these she had the men.

From mines one turns inevitably to the activities, continued though markedly subdued, of German submarines. On November 16th the British steamer *Arlington Court*, 4,900 tons, was sunk in the Atlantic by torpedo in the height of a south-west gale, the survivors being rescued after several days in open boats. Of these, a magnificent feat of seamanship and endurance was performed by a youth of eighteen, named Morrison, a native of Stornoway in the Island of Lewis. Morrison was the only one of a party of six in one of the boats who knew how to set sail. He took charge, and made a course with the aid of a small compass until he reached a busy shipping lane, where they were picked up by a Norwegian tanker. For six days he never left the tiller except when he took a spell at the oars to try to warm himself. On being landed at a port on the south coast of England, he refused to be taken to hospital along with the rest, but insisted on travelling north the long journey home. There he rested and recuperated until he was summoned down to London to be congratulated by the Admiralty.

On November 19th the British *Pensilva*, 2,200 tons, was sunk by a torpedo. The crew knew nothing till they heard the explosion, and then the periscope of a submarine was sighted. They took to their boats, but as the ship floated and no further attack appeared imminent, they began to pull back. A second torpedo, however, then hit and sank the ship, and the crew were later picked up by a destroyer. On November 23rd five exhausted seamen were picked up by a trawler in the Atlantic, and they brought the news of the loss of yet another Dutch vessel, the *Slidrecht*, 5,100 tons, carrying petrol to Norway. The U-boat gave the crew half an hour to abandon ship, although they protested they were neutrals, and the Dutch flags were prominently painted on the sides of the *Slidrecht*.

The French Admiralty now announced the sinking of two German submarines by the same French torpedo-boat, the *Scirocco*. In the first case a French naval aeroplane spotted the U-boat and sent out a wireless message. The *Scirocco* appeared in response and dropped depth charges. The submarine broke surface in her wake out of control, then disappeared vertically. Three days after this, on a bright moonlight night, the *Scirocco* saw a submarine silhouetted against the sky, and opened fire with her guns. The submarine crash dived, and the torpedo-boat, racing to the spot, dropped depth charges. The submarine reappeared bows first, stayed thus poised a few moments, then disappeared, leaving vast quantities of oil on the surface. Another French vessel, the surveying vessel *Amiral Mouchez*, was on convoy-escort duty when a torpedo was fired at her and missed. Depth charges were dropped, with believed successful result.

From the British Admiralty came the news of a further case of attempted scuttling, the German *Bertha Fisser*, 4,100 tons, attempting to sink herself when stopped by a British warship off Iceland. She ran, however, on the rocks. Another German ship, the *Borkum*, 2,600 tons, after being captured in the North Sea, was shelled by a German submarine as the British prize crew were taking her into port. None of the British was killed, but four of the German crew were. The ship was driven ashore and abandoned. Another German vessel of 4,400 tons was safely brought into a British harbour.

Oversea activities were renewed on November 25th when two bombing attacks were made by German aircraft on some of H.M. ships in the North Sea. Many bombs were dropped, but no hits or casualties were sustained. Further raids, with no result, were also made on the Orkneys and Shetlands. The Royal Air Force was also not inactive, for several important naval bases in north-west Germany, including Heligoland, were visited by British aeroplanes, and on November 28th three mine-laying seaplanes at Borkum were attacked with machine-guns.

On November 27th a German patrol vessel struck a German mine close to the spot where the German S.T. 301 sank with nearly all hands. In the case of this second vessel, fourteen men were drowned. The Great Belt, Denmark's fairway between her two main islands, was now reported to be so full of drifting mines that warnings were issued against any sailing in it. From England it was announced that a new British mine-field of three hundred square miles had been laid between the Thames Estuary and the Schelde in Holland.

The public now learnt of the loss, on November 23rd, of the armed merchant cruiser *Rawalpindi* in action against the pocket battleship *Deutschland* and a German cruiser. The *Rawalpindi* was originally a P. & O. liner of 16,600 tons, which the Admiralty had taken over at the outbreak of war and fitted with two broadsides each of four six-inch guns. Being of good sea-keeping qualities, she was put on the stormy seas of the Northern patrol for the purpose of stopping enemy merchant vessels or of fighting armed enemy merchant cruisers of the same calibre as herself. Although now a man-of-war proper as opposed to the *defensively* armed merchant vessels referred to earlier in this history, she was never a match, nor meant to be, for the strongly armed and thickly armoured regular men-of-war of any navy. Risks have to be taken, however, and when cruising to the south-east of Iceland she sighted, at 3.30 p.m. on November 23rd, an enemy ship. Her captain, Captain Kennedy, R.N., after examining the ship through binoculars, said: "It's the *Deutschland* all right," and ordered the crew, which consisted mainly of pensioners and reservists, to action stations. Realizing the *Rawalpindi* had no chance whatsoever of fighting even a remotely successful action against the *Deutschland*, Captain Kennedy altered course to bring the enemy on the starboard quarter and lit smoke floats to endeavour to effect his ship's escape. Now the second enemy ship, a cruiser, was seen to starboard, and Captain Kennedy must have realized he was doomed. The *Deutschland*, seeing the nature of her prey—to this stocky ship the *Rawalpindi* must have appeared like some gracious antlered stag—signalled the *Rawalpindi* to stop, then fired a warning shot. Surrender not being in the vocabulary of the Royal Navy, Captain Kennedy refused to comply, whereupon, at 3.45 p.m., the eleven-inch guns of the pocket battleship opened fire at 10,000 yards. The *Rawalpindi* immediately replied with all the guns on her engaged side, her four starboard six-inch.

The third salvo put out all the lights and broke the electric winches of the armour supply. The fourth shot away the whole of the bridge and the wireless room. Both German ships now closed rapidly, the cruiser going round the *Rawalpindi*'s stern and firing from the port side. The *Rawalpindi* maintained the fight until every single gun had been put out of action and the whole ship was ablaze except for the fo'c'sle and poop. About 4.20 p.m. the enemy ceased fire, whereupon the only three boats in the *Rawalpindi* not shattered by shells were lowered, some forty survivors getting into them. Of these, two boats with thirty men were picked up by the German ships and the men made prisoners. At

6.15 p.m. a British cruiser rushed upon the scene, whereupon the *Deutschland* and her consort made off in the gathering dark and storm, the British cruiser endeavouring to shadow them. The third boat, containing eleven survivors, was picked up in a waterlogged condition by another ex-P. & O. liner, the *Chitral*. The *Rawalpindi* continued to burn amidships till 8 p.m., when she turned turtle and foundered in the bitter dark, taking with her all the remaining hands, which numbered some two hundred and sixty officers and men. The survivors picked up by the *Chitral* were later congratulated at the Admiralty by the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Charles Little, and indeed the *Rawalpindi* had put up a magnificent fight against more than hopeless odds. The conduct of the Germans on their part was faultless throughout. They gave the *Rawalpindi* a fair chance to surrender, fought her legitimately as she did not stop, ceased fire as soon as they could in order to avoid inflicting any further unnecessary torture on a helpless but gallant enemy, and saved what few men it was possible for them to save.

In consequence of the new mine menace round English coasts, the mercantile losses for the week ended November 27th showed a sharp rise—to eleven British ships totalling 25,700 tons, two French ships totalling 3,000 tons, and four large neutral vessels totalling 23,900 tons. It was probably in consequence of this danger that the Eire Government announced at this time its decision to establish a miniature navy of torpedo-boats and armed trawlers for operating round the Irish Free State coasts.

Early on the morning of November 30th a British submarine, damaged by the weather and escorted by two British destroyers, arrived at a Norwegian port to effect repairs. The destroyers, to comply with international law, left within twenty-four hours. The submarine, however, was able to remain on until the damage had been made good and she was seaworthy again; this was allowable by international law.

Further awards to members of the mercantile marine were now announced. Captain Huntley, master of the unarmed s.s. *Baharistan*, was awarded the O.B.E. for showing great presence of mind when attacked by a U-boat off Land's End. Though it was at dead of night, he turned right inshore and by extremely good seamanship made good his vessel's escape. The captain of the s.s. *Karamea* was similarly honoured. Though chased savagely at close range by a submarine, he refused to quit his vessel, trusting to naval help arriving in time to save

him, which indeed it did. The s.s. *Stonegate* also figured in the news. This vessel had been provided with a stern gun for defence, and on sighting a U-boat she manned the gun, which was of a similar calibre to the submarine's, and exchanged shot for shot at a fair rate of fire. The thirteenth shot from the enemy holed her two feet above the water-line, but she fought on, and soon her shots fell too close for the submarine's liking, which finally broke off the action and submerged to escape damage. The captain of the *Stonegate* was awarded the O.B.E. and the gunlayer the medal of the order.

The month closed with Russia attacking Finland, the reasons for her mining in September the approaches to Kronstadt naval base being now only too painfully apparent. Whether the bear would prove a grizzly or a sloth remained to be seen.

Germany chose the end of this month for announcing a tightening of the mine and submarine blockade of England. The official announcement was as follows :

"The extension of the economic war to goods of German origin in neutral ships and with a neutral destination represents another breach of international law by England. It is in clear contradiction of the acknowledged principle of international law, especially the Paris Declaration of Sea Rights of 1856. This new breach of law hits the neutrals as much as Germany. The German Government have taken note of the situation created by England and reserve the right to take counter-measures."

No allusion was made in this announcement to the fact that France had decided to act in collaboration with Great Britain. A spokesman of the German Government stated that it was Germany's intention to isolate England completely so that no British or neutral vessel could enter or leave her harbours ; any losses which neutral countries might incur would be their own fault, since they had taken no effective steps to resist the British blockade measures. From Amsterdam it was simultaneously announced that, since the *Simon Bolivar* disaster, Dutch shipping circles, in collaboration with naval specialists, had been examining new measures of protection against the mine danger and that despite all risks the shipping of the Netherlands would carry on.

In spite of these further threats from Germany, figures were already coming forward to show that the British counter-measures were beginning to bear fruit, for shipping losses were again subsiding. From U-boats

alone the numbers of German prisoners captured by Great Britain amounted to one hundred and forty-four, and the last day of November 1939 saw the capture of a submarine and her entire crew. More waves of attacks from mine, submarine, and surface raider could be expected, but waves from their very nature were bound to subside ; England still stood firm as a rock above a sea of troubles.

CHAPTER 4

THE WAR IN THE AIR

BY E. N. B. BENTLEY, A.F.R.Ae.S.

WITHIN an hour of Great Britain declaring war on Germany London had its first air-raid warning.

"Now it's come," was the general thought ; and in many homes there was expectation of the mass air attacks by wave after wave of bombers, which was already happening in Poland, and which had been predicted for years as the opening move of the next Great War. But the time had not yet come ; it was a false alarm, due to an unidentified aeroplane crossing the coast, and the "all clear" was sounded half an hour later. The first three months of the war passed without anything remotely resembling such intensive air attacks as were feared.

The most remarkable thing about the early part of the War of 1939 was that it differed absolutely from what most people had been led to expect. On the sea, unrestricted submarine and mine warfare could reasonably have been foretold. On the land, the existence of the Maginot Line on one side and the Siegfried Line on the other made a position of stalemate on the French frontier almost inevitable. But the almost complete lack of offensive air action by both sides was something which no one would have ventured to predict before the war.

Before anyone can have a proper understanding of the war in the air, it is essential to have some knowledge of the technical side of air warfare and its organization. It is not only the aeroplanes and the aircraft industry which must be considered, but due attention must be paid to the many other branches of industry which all help to keep our Air Force in readiness for defence and attack. The man-power needed to keep them in service, the supplies of petrol and bombs, machine-guns and ammunition, lorries and tenders, the reserve aeroplanes required to make good the losses in action, and the flying training-schools for pilots, observers, gunners, and photographers are all essential parts of the whole picture.

It is worth remembering, for example, that for every man who goes

into the air there are eight or ten men required on the ground, not to mention the quota of members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (25,000 strong), who are employed as motor transport drivers, clerks, telephone and teleprinter operators, balloon-fabric workers, traders and draughtsmen, cooks, orderlies, etc., etc.

It is easy to talk of raids by hundreds of aeroplanes, repeated day after day; but few people realize the magnitude of the task involved. To begin with, no ordinary aerodrome could operate or accommodate a hundred big bombers. In the case, for example, of one squadron of, say, twenty big Heinkel bombers the total number of men involved, including crews and ground staff, would be about 500 to 600. Petrol for one raid of 500 miles out and back would amount to about 400 gallons for each aeroplane, or 8,000 gallons for one squadron for one night's raiding. Two tons of bombs for each aeroplane means forty tons of bombs each day; not to mention machine-gun ammunition.

If this is the daily requirement of one squadron, it will be appreciated that the transport of material for the whole of the active bombing force is a gigantic task. Also the modern aeroplane is such an extremely complicated piece of mechanism that a few unlucky shots can do damage which would take several days of skilled labour to repair. Under intensive war conditions this means that the aeroplane would have to be replaced by another until it was again fit for service. Continuous and intensive raids involve such staff work and organization as are difficult enough to achieve under normal conditions; when subjected to opposition and reprisals, they become infinitely more difficult.

Another point of the greatest importance is the character and training of the men who fly the aeroplanes, as this must have a decisive effect on the power of the air arm. But it is also necessary to point out that, whilst courage and initiative can sometimes compensate for an aeroplane of inferior performance, to send pilots up in aeroplanes which are appreciably inferior to those of the enemy is to invite a rapid decline in the morale of the air force.

All Governments are naturally secretive regarding the strength of their air forces. The figures given in newspapers and annuals are only estimates referring to a year, and possibly two years, before the war. The German rate of production was then probably near its maximum, and did not increase so very greatly. The British, and later the French aircraft industries, increased their output enormously in the twelve months prior to the war.

The total number of aeroplanes is not necessarily a measure of the actual striking force. Of that total, perhaps one-third will be available for immediate offensive action ; and about the same number will be in store for replacement of casualties. The remainder will consist mostly of training aeroplanes.

These proportions are not, of course, fixed ; they are roughly equal to those existing at the end of the War of 1914. It is probable that the complicated construction of the modern war aeroplane necessitates a higher proportion of reserves, owing to the difficulty of repairing quickly those damaged in action.

The following figures are estimates of the aircraft strength of various forces in 1939. First-line aeroplanes are generally considered to be those actually in service, or in immediate reserve, with squadrons of the air force ; in which case training aeroplanes and those in store at depots or factories are not included. In some cases, however, first-line aircraft are taken to include almost all except training aeroplanes :

	First Line	Reserves
Great Britain	3,000	3,000
France	2,500	3,000
Germany	3,000-4,000	4,000
Russia	5,000	5,000
Poland	1,500	—

Normally the greater part of the Royal Air Force is based on the British Isles, but throughout the world, in the Colonies and Dependencies, units of the R.A.F. are stationed for their defence. The Dominions of Canada and New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, the Commonwealth of Australia, and the Irish Free State maintain their own air forces.

When hostilities broke out the R.A.F., under the command of Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril Newall, Chief of the Air Staff, was divided into four commands. The Bomber Command was under Air Chief Marshal Sir Edgar Ludlow-Hewitt. Its functions were fairly obvious. Being the principal weapon of offence, this command was the largest.

The Fighter Command, under Air Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, was more a defensive arm, and therefore, in addition to the fighter squadrons, it also dealt with the Balloon Barrage Group and the Observer Corps. The Territorial anti-aircraft brigades and searchlight battalions were also operated by the Fighter Command. The Army Co-operation Group as

a unit of the R.A.F. came under the Fighter Command, but its operations were controlled by the Army.

The Coastal Command, under Sir Frederick Bowhill, looked after all reconnaissance aircraft, stationed round the coast of Great Britain, whether aeroplanes, seaplanes, or flying-boats. Until about the middle of 1937 it was also responsible for the aircraft and aircraft personnel on board aircraft carriers and other ships of the Royal Navy. The administrative and operational control of all aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm on board ships of the Royal Navy subsequently became the responsibility of the Admiralty. R.A.F. pilots and mechanics on board ship were gradually replaced by Naval personnel.

The Training Command (Air Vice-Marshal Arthur Longmore), although less belligerent than the other three, had an equally important duty to perform. With the expansion of the R.A.F. it had had to supply pilots and airmen in ever-increasing numbers and still keep up the same high standard of skill. On the outbreak of war a powerful force of the R.A.F. was immediately available in France, ready to co-operate with the French forces. Air Vice-Marshal P. H. L. Playfair commanded the Advance Air Striking Force and Air Vice-Marshal C. H. Blount the Air Component of the British Expeditionary Force.

The overseas commands of the Royal Air Force were : Middle East (Cairo), with a subordinate command in Palestine ; Iraq ; India ; Mediterranean (Malta) ; Aden ; Singapore.

Each R.A.F. command consisted usually of several groups, and each group was made up of so many squadrons. The squadron was the operational unit of the Royal Air Force, and was generally divided into two or three flights. A fighter flight would consist of three (or possibly five) aeroplanes, with about the same number of aeroplanes in reserve. They would fly either as a squadron of nine aeroplanes ; or each flight could operate by itself. With the long-range night bombers, on the other hand, it was more usual for each aeroplane to operate on its own.

At the end of the War of 1914 the Royal Air Force was the most powerful in the world, with a strength of over 20,000 aeroplanes (including reserves, trainers, and aeroplanes overseas), about 30,000 officers and 260,000 other ranks. By the end of 1919 it had been cut down to about one-tenth of this size. In 1922 it had dwindled to 32 squadrons (20 of which were overseas), with a strength of 350 first-line aeroplanes.

From then onwards it grew slowly but surely on the very sound founda-



AIR CHIEF MARSHAL
SIR HUGH C T DOWDING



AIR CHIEF MARSHAL
SIR CYRIL L N NEWALL
THE ROYAL AIR FORCE



AIR CHIEF MARSHAL
SIR I R LUDLOW HEWITT

tions laid by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Hugh Trenchard (afterwards Lord Trenchard), the "father" of the R.A.F. In 1935 the strength had increased to more than 1,000 first-line aeroplanes, 50 squadrons at home and 20 overseas. From that date the real expansion of the R.A.F. began; so that in 1938 there were more than 100,000 officers and men and 180 squadrons, including those overseas, in the Fleet Air Arm and the Balloon Barrage.

The French *Armée de l'Air*, like our own R.A.F., was an independent force under the command of General Joseph Vuillemin, a pilot of the war of 1914, although Naval aviation was under the Minister of Marine. It was divided into four command areas at home and one overseas.

The First Air Command had its headquarters at Dijon, in the east; the Second Air Command was in Paris; the Third Air Command at Tours, in the west; the Fourth Air Command at Aix-en-Provence in the south; and the Fifth Air Command in Algiers, Northern Africa.

The unit of the Army of the Air was the *escadrille*, which corresponded roughly to our squadron and consisted of ten to twelve first-line aeroplanes. Several *escadrilles* formed a *groupe d'aviation*, and a *régiment d'aviation* was made up of several *groupes*.

In 1934 the Army of the Air consisted of about 2,000 officers and 37,000 other ranks, and there were approximately 1,200 aeroplanes at home, 400 overseas, and 60 with the fleet. By 1938 it had increased to about 3,000 officers and nearly 60,000 other ranks; and it was estimated that there would be a first-line strength of 2,600 aeroplanes by 1940, the eventual aim being a force of 5,000 first-line aircraft and 150,000 men.

The *Luftwaffe* (the German Air Arm), under Marshal Goering, with General Milch as his right-hand man, was a separate Service from the Army and the Navy, just as was the Royal Air Force and the *Armée de l'Air*. Early in 1939 it was reorganized into separate area commands like those of France: Air Fleet No. 1 (East) with headquarters in Berlin; Air Fleet No. 2 (North), at Brunswick; Air Fleet No. 3 (West) at München.

The unit of the Air Arm was the squadron (*Staffel*), generally consisting of nine first-line aeroplanes. A group (*Gruppe*) was made up of three squadrons and a command (*Geschwade*) consisted of three groups. The anti-aircraft regiments were also commanded by the Air Arm.

The German Air Arm was officially proclaimed in 1935, with a strength of twenty-seven squadrons (240 aeroplanes), although it had been in existence for some years before that. By 1937 it had increased to 250 squadrons, comprising over 2,000 aeroplanes.

Some knowledge of the weapon itself, i.e. the aeroplane, is imperative if the war in the air is to be thoroughly understood.

As an engineering achievement the aeroplane is in a class by itself. Whereas in other structures on which human life depends it is possible to play for safety by adding extra material, an aeroplane cannot afford to carry any superfluous weight, and yet it must be strong enough to resist any sort of manœuvre imposed upon it, voluntarily or involuntarily, by the pilot.

For instance, if an aeroplane diving at, say, 400 miles an hour is pulled out of the dive into a steep climb, it levels out at the bottom of the dive, but the whole momentum due to that 400 m.p.h. is trying to make the aeroplane (and the man inside it) continue in the straight line of the dive. The pilot feels himself pressed into his seat with a force of several times his own weight ; and not only the pilot but also the aeroplane experiences this deceleration due to sudden change of direction. The wings of an aeroplane which weighs, say, two tons may for a few seconds during the pull out from a dive have to support a load equivalent to ten tons.

A miscalculation by the designer, a flaw in the material, or a piece of careless workmanship, and that dive may finish ten feet deep in the ground. Spectators will say they heard an explosion and then saw the wings break off. What they heard was no explosion, but the final yielding of a piece of steel stressed beyond its limit of eighty tons per square inch.

That is why every piece of material used in the construction of an aeroplane must be inspected before it is used ; why every single part must be inspected after it is made and before it is built into the aeroplane ; and why the aeroplane itself is inspected after every flight. This detailed system of inspection also explains, partly, why an aeroplane costs so much to build.

The cost of an aeroplane is a subject on which most people have very vague ideas ; or, more generally, no ideas at all beyond a question mark. Could you say whether one of those " Hurricane " fighters, of which you read in the papers, has cost you and your neighbours £2,000 or £20,000 ? Before the war a rough estimate for the cost of civil air liners was £1 for every lb. weight ; the weight of the aeroplane being its weight fully loaded with passengers and fuel. The cost of a military aeroplane will be reduced because it is built in large numbers ; but this will be offset by the extra cost of machine-guns and equipment. The £1 per lb. is, of course, only a rough guide. The Hawker " Hurricane," by the way, weighs 6,000 lb.

There are some characteristics of modern military aircraft which

apply to most types, large or small, whether built in England, France, or Germany.

In order to reduce the drag, and so increase the speed, the wings are made as small as possible consistent with lifting the aeroplane off the ground at a reasonable speed. This means that the wing loading is high, and every square foot of wing may be lifting anything from 20 to 30 lb. The low drag is a disadvantage when landing, because, even when the engine is shut off, the aeroplane will travel for miles before the speed drops appreciably. Therefore flaps are fitted at the trailing edge of the wing, which can be lowered so that they act as air brakes and slow up the aeroplane. When taking off, the flaps are slightly lowered so as to increase the lift of the wing, without adding too much drag.

Another essential and drag-reducing part of the modern high-speed aeroplane is the retractable undercarriage, which folds up into the wing once the aeroplane has left the ground. This may be done by electric motor or by an hydraulic pump; and there may be also an emergency hand-operated gear which can be used if the main apparatus fails. When making a forced landing away from an aerodrome, it is often preferable to land with the undercarriage up, as this can be done with comparative safety, and may cause less damage than running into a hedge or ditch with the wheels and turning a somersault.

A supercharged engine is used in order to take advantage of the fact that the density of the air, and therefore its resistance to the motion of the aeroplane, grows less as the height above the earth increases. With an ordinary engine the power would decrease with height, because the engine could not take in a sufficient weight of air to work efficiently. The supercharger is simply a pump which forces air into the engine instead of relying on atmospheric pressure alone. Full use of the supercharger cannot be made at ground-level for more than a short time (except in case of emergency) because of the excessive power developed. Full power is not used until the "rated height" or "supercharged height" is reached, when the density of the air has become considerably reduced. This means that aeroplanes with supercharged engines develop their greatest speed, not at ground-level, but possibly 10,000 feet up.

Nowadays the top speed of an aeroplane may be five times as great as its landing speed, and because of this a variable-pitch propeller is essential. Whether the aeroplane is moving across the aerodrome at 40 miles an hour or is flying at 350 m.p.h., the propeller is turning at about the same speed, when the engine is at full throttle. The tip of the propeller

may be moving in a circle at a speed of 500 miles per hour. In one case the tip speed of the propeller is about twelve times the forward speed ; in the other case it is less than twice the forward speed. It is obvious, therefore, that a propeller which is designed to be most efficient at the maximum speed of the aeroplane is very ineffective at low speeds. The variable-pitch propeller (or airscrew, as the technical people like to call it) has been designed to overcome this difficulty, and is perhaps the most important single item which has contributed to the efficiency of the modern aeroplane.

These improvements, whilst increasing the efficiency of the aeroplanes, have also added very greatly to the cost and complication.

The modern fighting aeroplane is infinitely more complicated than that of the last war, both with regard to its construction and its flying. And the repair of damaged aeroplanes is a very much longer, and more skilled, job than it was twenty years ago. A typical fighter in 1918 had an engine of 200 h.p., weighed about 2,000 lb., and cost £2,000. A 1939 fighter would have an engine of over 1,000 h.p. and weigh 5,000 or 6,000 lb.

The bomber is the real offensive weapon of the air arm ; the fighter, at first glance considerably more offensive than the bomber, is really the defensive weapon which is used to combat the bomber. The fighter is also used to keep the air clear of enemy fighters, so that the bombers and reconnaissance aeroplanes can perform their tasks with the least interference.

A typical heavy bomber at the outbreak of the War of 1939 was the Vickers "Wellington" with two 1,000-h.p. Bristol air-cooled engines, weighing eleven tons fully loaded, with a top speed of 265 m.p.h., and able to carry (in addition to its load of bombs) enough petrol to fly 3,000 miles. The German Heinkel bomber weighed almost the same as the "Wellington," and with a bomb load of 2,200 lb. could fly 2,140 miles. With big bombers it is possible to increase the bomb load at the expense of petrol, and vice versa, and so obtain a considerable variety of bomb loads and ranges, according to the requirements.

The empty weight of the Heinkel is about six tons (52 per cent. of the total loaded weight). This is unusually light and would seem to indicate that it is not so strongly built as British bombers. A more usual figure for the empty weight would be 60 to 65 per cent. The normal petrol load of the Heinkel is rather over three tons (30 per cent. of the total weight) and the normal bomb load is one ton (9 per cent. of the total weight).

By carrying less petrol, for a range of, say, 1,300 miles, the bomb load can be doubled.

By way of contrast the Messerschmitt fighter, which has to be more strongly built than a bomber, has an empty weight of 75 per cent. of the total loaded weight. The fuel weighs 15 per cent. and the guns and ammunition 5 per cent. of the total weight.

Another point worth noting is that neither bombers nor any other kind of aeroplane fly at full speed all the time. They fly at cruising speed (which may be about 80 per cent. of their top speed), so that the engine is not working to full capacity and the petrol consumption is kept to reasonable proportions.

Owing to the big load it has to carry, and therefore the big wings and fuselage, the heavy bomber is comparatively slow and is generally used for raiding at night or in cloudy weather, when it cannot so easily be intercepted. The crew would consist of at least four men, and probably more; the first pilot, the second pilot (navigator), wireless operator, and two gunners (one in the front and one in the tail).

The fighter aeroplane is at the opposite end of the scale, and here almost everything (except armament) is sacrificed to performance. It is obvious that if a bomber comes over at 20,000 feet above the ground, the fighter must have a very high rate of climb as well as a high top speed if it is to stand any chance of attacking the bomber. The Hawker "Hurricane," with a 1,000-h.p. Rolls-Royce "Merlin" engine, in spite of weighing over two and half tons, can climb at a rate of 2,400 feet per minute and has a top speed of almost 340 miles an hour. The four machine-guns fixed in each wing are fired by the pilot from his cockpit, and he aims his aeroplane at the target by sights mounted on the cowling in front of him.

In between these two types of aeroplane there are numerous others, such as the Bristol "Blenheim" medium bomber, with a much higher speed (and smaller bomb load) than the heavy bomber, the Fairey "Battle" single-engined bomber, and the Westland "Lysander" aeroplane, specially designed for observation work in co-operation with the Army. All these have been tried out and proved successful under active-service conditions of today.

The War of 1939 started with the unprovoked attack of Germany on Poland.

Hostilities between Germany and Poland began at about 5.30 a.m. on the morning of September 1st, when strong units of the German Air Arm flew over the frontier and without any previous declaration of war

or other warning began the bombardment of Krakow, Katowice, Tczew (near Danzig), and Tunel. At the same time mechanized units and other ground forces crossed into Poland from Slovakia, East Prussia, Pomerania, and Silesia.

The Polish War was the first occasion on which Marshal Goering's "invincible Air Force" had been up against any real opposition. It was expected that the Polish Air Force would give a very good account of itself. Poland was not dependent on any of the Great Powers for her aeroplanes, and possessed an aircraft industry of her own of considerable technical merit. The P.L.Z. (National Aircraft Factory) Lhos bomber, with a top speed of 275 m.p.h. and a bomb capacity of two tons, was one of the most formidable aeroplanes of its size in the world. Fighting aeroplanes of all-metal construction, some carrying shell-firing guns as well as machine-guns, were standard equipment in the fighter squadrons. At the end of 1938 the Polish Air Force consisted of about 1,500 first-line machines and another 500 in reserve. The personnel was highly trained and very proficient at their work.

Unfortunately this small and capable fighting force never had a chance to show its real ability. Poland was honeycombed with German spy cells, and when the war started the German *Luftwaffe* were already in possession of the plans of the fifty aerodromes throughout the country. Within two hours of the outbreak of war waves of German bombers had mercilessly bombed and set fire to the principal aerodromes, including those of Lodz, Brest, Lwow, Wilna, Posen, Warsaw, etc. Although Poland was supplying anti-aircraft guns to other countries, her own anti-aircraft defences were meagre in the extreme. The result was that hundreds of planes were destroyed in their hangars, before the Polish crews realized that their country was thrown into a war of life and death.

Even so the German aeroplanes did not have things all their own way, and many were brought down by Polish fighting planes and anti-aircraft guns. With the effectiveness of the Polish Air Force reduced at the very outset, the German airmen then turned their attention to attacking concentrations of troops behind the lines and the railway communications, to facilitate the advance of their ground troops.

Although the German Führer on the outbreak of war promised the world that he would not bomb the civilian population provided that other nations preserved this rule, the *Luftwaffe* in action in Poland from the opening day of hostilities broke this promise and every rule of humanitarian warfare. The conquest of Poland was carried out with utter

ruthlessness. Marshal Goering had often in his public speeches stated that he would use the *Luftwaffe* with merciless severity. The Nazis hoped that they could reduce the civil population by terrorization, thus expecting an early demand for peace.

Bombing raids were carried out on Warsaw and other towns with this object. On September 2nd the *Luftwaffe* bombed no fewer than twenty open towns, beside twelve towns which might come within the definition of military centres.

A further blow to the Poles was the discovery, or capture, by the Germans of the secret code used between the aerodromes. As a result, at some of the more distant aerodromes messages were received telling the commanders to keep their machines where they were and not to move. It was said that in consequence several hundred aeroplanes were immobile in their hangars during the first most critical part of the war, and actually took no fighting part in the war at all.

It must be acknowledged that the German campaign against Poland was carried out in masterly fashion. The mechanized army advanced at the rate of many miles a day, helped by the destructive work in advance of the Air Arm. Without the co-operation of the *Luftwaffe* this rapid advance would have been quite impossible. Reconnaissance aeroplanes were able to observe the advance of the Polish reinforcements and hunt out concentrations of troops and inform the bombing squadrons and artillery of their position, and they were immediately dealt with. The Polish Air Force, that part of it which could take any part in the war, was kept constantly on the defensive, while the German *Luftwaffe*, with its great numerical superiority, was able to carry out to the full all the duties which fall to the lot of a well-organized air force.

The Poles announced that on September 5th thirty Polish aeroplanes had carried out a raid over Berlin, and that all returned safely. There has never been any confirmation of this raid, and it was stoutly denied by the Germans. One explanation is that the report was issued by the Polish Ministry to put heart into their own people. At about the same time it was also reported by Polish news agencies that the Germans had dropped troops by parachutes behind the Polish lines. The Germans, while denying that they had used parachute troops, *did* admit that they had such troops, the first official intimation of their existence in Germany.

If the Poles put out false reports, so did their enemy. A supposedly Polish news agency published a report at the end of the first week of the war that large reinforcements of British and French aircraft were on their

way to Poland, and the Polish Air League broadcast instructions to the public on how to distinguish these aeroplanes from German raiders. Later it was discovered that the news agency was a German-owned one, and that the report had been published to increase public demoralization when the news was found to be false.

By September 7th the Germans had occupied the west and north-west of Poland, with the exception of the Hel peninsula and the port of Gdynia. The Westerplatte, a small island utilized as a Polish arsenal at Danzig, surrendered that day after putting up a heroic defence. With no anti-aircraft guns or aircraft, for ten days the small garrison of a couple of score of men held out against point-blank shelling from the battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* and bombing attacks by relays of Junker JU 87 dive bombers. These aeroplanes carried one large bomb weighing half a ton, which was powerful enough to shatter anything but the most modern bomb-proof fortifications.

At the start of the second week of the war the *Luftwaffe* had by sheer weight of numbers reduced the effective power of the Polish Air Force to practically *nil*. With armies of approximately equal capabilities the command of the air gives almost incalculable advantage to the side holding it. Whereas one commander knows the dispositions of his opponent's troops and reinforcements and also any day-by-day changes, his adversary knows nothing of what is happening beyond his own front line.

At the close of the second week of the war the Germans had occupied all the territory west of the Vistula and had advanced in the south to Lwow, the capital of the Polish Ukraine. The great bulk of the Polish forces were now hemmed in between the Rivers San and Burg, but Warsaw and Mödlin, its defending fortress, held out.

The main military objectives of the *Luftwaffe* had now been satisfactorily completed, and the German bombers transferred their activities to bombing the towns still behind the Polish lines. Nothing was spared, and attacks by bombs and machine-guns were made without distinction on roads crowded with refugees fleeing to some possibly safer quarter, hospital trains, open towns, and villages.

The capital, Warsaw, made a heroic resistance under the Lord Mayor Starzynski. It had been bombed several times daily since the outbreak of war, and now suffered untold tortures. It was attacked twenty or thirty times a day with high-explosive and incendiary bombs. The Germans were now able to use captured Polish aerodromes within easy

reach of the capital, and the bombers could therefore make several return journeys during the day, each time reloaded with a fresh supply of bombs and machine-gun ammunition.

The intensity of the air raids on the city may be gauged from a Polish report published at the end of the third week of the war, which stated that eighty-seven aeroplanes had been shot down in Warsaw and the suburbs since the first day of the war. The number shot down could only have been a comparatively small proportion of the number of bombers used to raid the city.

Marshal Goering had left for the Polish front to take up his position as Commander-in-Chief of the *Luftwaffe* on September 11th, but whoever deputized for him till that time had done his work well and left little for his superior officer but to view the results achieved.

Early on the morning of Sunday, September 17th, the Russian Red Army began the invasion of Poland and crossed the whole line from the Latvian-Polish frontier to the Dniester (the Soviet-Roumanian frontier). The Soviet Army used the same technique as the Germans had used, sending their aeroplanes ahead to scout and also to drop leaflets in Russian and Ukrainian, declaring that the Russian troops were come to liberate the White Russians and Ukrainians from the Polish yoke.

Although at first the Poles on the frontier were fooled by the report that the Russians were come to fight on their side, they soon found out their mistake, and several combats took place between Russian and Polish aircraft in the Podolia. But the areas occupied by the Russians were inhabited by Ukrainians and White Russians, who received the invaders with enthusiasm. Polish resistance was therefore of little avail.

The invasion from the east removed any hope that the Polish High Command may have had of withdrawing its troops into the difficult marshy land of the east, and on September 18th Marshal Smigly-Rydz issued orders that the remaining aeroplanes, which had not been destroyed by the enemies, should be flown to neighbouring neutral countries to prevent them falling into German hands. About 400 aeroplanes, mostly fighters, escaped to Roumania or Latvia, where they were interned. These aircraft were still in fighting condition, but all the aerodromes, with ammunition and fuel supplies, were in the hands of the enemies.

On September 19th, under three weeks from the start of the war, Marshal Goering announced that the German *Luftwaffe* had completed its work in Poland. Germany was reported to have lost 200-300 machines, or about 10 per cent. of the aeroplanes employed.

Warsaw, in face of a terrible bombardment by air and land, and threatened by drought, famine, and disease, surrendered on September 26th. There was not a building which had not been damaged by bomb, shell, or fire : whole streets were in ruins ; the dead totalled 170,000 and the injured probably as many again. The last military Polish post to surrender was the little garrison of Hel, at the point of the peninsula of that name which had resisted intensive bombardment from the sea and air for a month and only hauled down the Polish flag on October 1st. The war was over.

The rapid conquest of Poland was a first-class example of the overwhelming advantage accruing in modern warfare to the side which has command of the air. The numerical superiority and mechanization of the German Army were important factors, but their success could not possibly have been so rapid and effective if the *Luftwaffe* had not held the command of the air. The Russian invasion had little to do with the victory, which was for all practical purposes won before the Russians crossed the border. It merely prevented the Poles from retiring into the Marshes of the Pripet and Volhynia and reconstructing their forces for a spring campaign. The ability to seek out and destroy enemy troops behind the line, while at the same time denying such facilities to one's opponent, must be a general's dream of the perfect war.

Without direct help from her Allies, it was not to be expected that Poland would have successfully resisted attacks from a powerful country like Germany ; but the complete collapse of Polish resistance within a month exceeded even the expectations of the German High Command. Direct help by land or sea was impossible ; by air it would actually have been possible, at the expense of considerable losses, to hinder the German attack. But at such a distance, which included several hundred miles' flight across German territory, the Allies could not have brought sufficient weight to bear to prevent the invasion. Also the Poles had lost within the first few hours their principal aerodromes, and it would have been impossible for the machines of the Allies to land in safety or get replenishment of fuel and bombs.

An alternative was for the Allies to make an immediate air attack on the Western Front in such strength as to make it necessary for Germany to withdraw a large number of her aeroplanes from Poland. It is possible that if such a step had been carried out the invasion of Poland would have been very much delayed, but not necessarily prevented. It would, however, have shown both Poland and Germany that the Allies really meant

to fulfil their pledge to Poland, and also it might have enabled us to shorten the war by destroying armament works and aerodromes in Western Germany.

The day after war was declared by Great Britain, His Majesty the King sent this message to the Royal Air Force :

" The Royal Air Force has behind it a tradition no less inspiring than those of the older Services, and in the campaign which we have now been compelled to undertake you will have to assume responsibilities far greater than those which your service had to shoulder in the last war.

" One of the gravest of them will be the safeguarding of these islands from the menace of the air. I can assure all ranks of the Air Force of my supreme confidence in their skill and courage and in their ability to meet whatsoever calls may be made upon them.

GEORGE, R.I."

Knowing the importance attached by the Germans to the *Blitzkrieg*, and the savagery of their methods of warfare, for several days before September 3rd Great Britain had been fully prepared for air raids. Fighter squadrons were standing by with their engines warm, pilots in their flying-kit waiting to take the air at a moment's notice. Anti-aircraft guns and searchlights were manned. Air-raid wardens and other volunteer services were on duty ; including the Observer Corps, outposts whose duty it was to watch and report the movements of raiding aircraft. The balloon barrage was sent up over London.

In spite of its fatuous appearance, this barrage was an important part of the general scheme of defence. The balloon barrage, consisting of 500 hydrogen-filled captive balloons and controlled by 6,000 officers and men on the establishment of the Royal Air Force, was designed to protect London and other important objectives. Its aim was not to prevent enemy bombers reaching the Metropolis, but, should they get through, to keep them at a height where the anti-aircraft guns could bear on them.

If a bomber flew really low over London no anti-aircraft gun could stop it, since a machine speeding over the ground at 250 miles an hour or more has come and gone before even the liveliest gun crew can train and fire their weapon. But the same bomber at an elevation of anything over 6,000 feet presents a relatively slow-moving target, which can be followed with fair accuracy by the anti-aircraft gun crew. A chance hit at a machine

flashing by a few hundred feet up must be a direct one, but a shell bursting a few yards away can bring the craft down if flying at a greater height. So the balloon barrage, by keeping enemy bombers well up in the air, is of inestimable value in aiding the guns and searchlights to pin them in the sky.

Ever since the September 1938 crisis, when the country was caught unprepared for the European war which then threatened, Britain had been carrying out a thorough and far-reaching plan of civilian defence. Every city, town, and village in the kingdom had its A.R.P. patrols, its auxiliary fire service, and ambulances. Witness the enormous scale on which preparations were made: the network of deep concrete-covered trenches in open spaces, the official air-raid shelters every few yards, sandbagged police-stations, shops, fire-stations, fire-hydrants, hospitals, and patrol posts; the distribution of 40,000,000 free gas-masks, the issuing of free pamphlets on air-raid precautions, and the steel shelters, delivered free to every householder in the danger zones with an income of less than £250 a year. Also the large-scale evacuation of school-children, old people, and invalids from danger areas at the expense of the Government.

Instantly war broke out the regular police changed their familiar headgear for steel shrapnel helmets, and over every policeman's shoulder hung a haversack containing his gas-mask. These vast preparations functioned smoothly from the start, and the populace did its part in complying with the dozens of war-emergency regulations designed for the country's good.

It was more than three weeks before the first air raider reached this country, but several attempts were foiled, the raiders being met over the North Sea by our defending fighters, which drove them back.

The Royal Air Force was, in fact, the first to carry out a raid over enemy country. On the night of September 3rd-4th a number of long-range bombers flew far into Germany dropping millions of leaflets printed in German—propaganda messages to the German people. During the first few days of the war five such raids were made and a total of 20,000,000 leaflets dropped in Germany. These raids became known as "Lansbury raids," after George Lansbury, the Pacifist leader and Socialist.

Meanwhile, in the afternoon of September 4th the R.A.F. had also struck the first blow of the war against a military objective, by bombing the German bases at Wilhelmshaven (at the mouth of the Elbe) and Brunsbüttel (the entrance to the Kiel Canal). The Germans claimed that we lost twelve aeroplanes. Our Ministry of Information stated that this

claim was "grossly exaggerated," but issued no details about the number of raiding aeroplanes or the number of casualties.

In the raid on Wilhelmshaven a battleship at anchor was hit amidships and severely damaged ; but there seemed to be some doubt as to whether it was one of Germany's three pocket battleships or one of her new 35,000-ton battleships. A light cruiser alongside the harbour at Brunsbützel was also hit and heavily damaged.

Both these raids were made in cloudy weather, which enabled the bombers to make a surprise attack, which was pressed home in spite of intense anti-aircraft fire. One pilot described this experience as being "like riding over a Crystal Palace firework display, increased a hundred-fold."

In order to ensure hitting the battleships the bombers flew as low as 100 feet above the masts. One bomber, in fact, flew so low that it was wrecked by the explosion of the bomb dropped by the aeroplane ahead.

The following description of the raid was given by the leader of one of the formations of bombers :

"We set out in fine weather, flying at 2,000 feet, but we soon ran into a belt of cloud and came down to 300 feet. In the thick mist one pilot became separated from the others, but he took up station again after ten minutes or so. We were near the German coast when half a dozen enemy fighters came out to engage us. A game of hide-and-seek in the clouds followed, and our craft were successful in eluding their pursuers and left them behind.

"Conditions grew worse and there was heavy rain for an hour. Then the weather improved and my bombers gained height, giving a wide berth to all the islands along the German coast. We observed considerable activity by enemy merchant shipping. We made our landfall accurately and flew up the Elbe estuary until we sighted a number of German naval vessels. We were then flying at 6,000 feet, under a thin layer of cloud.

"The enemy held his fire until we were almost over our target. Then suddenly he opened up with every gun he could bring to bear on us ; it was terrific, especially the firing from the big ships, which seemed to carry seven anti-aircraft guns on either beam. You could watch the tracer shells rising after the flash of the gun in spirals and follow the whole of their course. We made our aircraft as difficult targets as we could by manœuvring. We then straightened out and dropped our bombs.

"At once we rose up into the clouds with the shells bursting round us and made for home, after an effective smack at the enemy. Our flight all returned home safely."

These raids showed that the Royal Air Force of 1939 was a worthy successor to that of 1918, and that the officers and men were willing to take big risks in order to achieve their object. The sinking, or complete disablement, of enemy warships is of such essential importance to us that it is difficult to see why such raids were not repeated.

An unsuccessful attempt was made by the German Air Arm to raid England on the morning of September 6th, and air-raid warnings were sounded over a large part of the Eastern Counties and in London. Fighter aircraft went up and drove off the raiders before they reached the coast. On their return some of the coastal anti-aircraft batteries opened fire on them, in mistake for German raiders, a misfortune due to either an over-eagerness on the part of the gunners, or a certain deficiency in their training in recognition of British and hostile aircraft.

Attempts to raid Paris were also made during the first week of the war, but they were frustrated by anti-aircraft fire and fighter attacks. The balloon barrage, copied from Britain, was sent up about a week later, when the Germans attempted a night raid on Paris. The French Army of the Air had bombed munition factories in the Saar Valley and had made many reconnaissance flights in the area between the Siegfried and Maginot Lines.

All this time the flying-boats and reconnaissance aeroplanes of the R.A.F. Coastal Command and the aeroplanes of the Fleet Air Arm were going about their business of patrolling the sea routes and searching for submarines. Although this work did not receive much publicity, except for occasional descriptions of the sinking of submarines, it was vitally necessary and was continued monotonously day after day in all weathers. As an indication of what this patrolling amounted to, the aircraft of the Coastal Command flew on reconnaissance, anti-submarine, and convoy patrols a distance of about one million miles in the first month of the war.

A successful attack on a submarine was described by the pilot in these words.

“ On the way home from an anti-submarine patrol I sighted a submarine on the surface about two miles away. It was travelling fast, at about twelve knots, in an easterly direction. I took cover in a cloud in order to approach the submarine from astern. As I came out of the cloud, flying at 1,500 feet, I tried with my binoculars to identify the submarine. Flying closer, I saw those characteristics which made me sure she was a German. To make absolutely certain I fired some rounds of ammunition near her to give

her a chance to identify herself. She did not, so I proceeded to dive, at the same time firing my front gun at someone wearing a white hat, who was standing on the conning tower. At 500 feet the man on the conning tower disappeared and the submarine started to dive. By the time I dropped my first salvo of bombs, the nearest of which hit the water fifteen or twenty yards directly ahead of the submarine, it was half under water. Explosions of the bombs blew her back to the surface. That gave me time to turn round, and I then carried out an attack from the port beam. The nearest bomb of my second salvo landed six feet to the side of the conning tower. It was a direct hit on the submarine's port side. There was a colossal explosion, and her whole stern lifted out of the water. She dived into the sea at an angle of thirty degrees. For twenty minutes afterwards I remained over the spot watching the large whirlpools caused by escaping air coming to the surface of the water. By that time I assumed the submarine to be out of action on the bottom of the sea and returned to my base."

On September 17th a German submarine commander sank the aircraft carrier *Courageous*, and obtained revenge for those submarines which had been hunted by the aeroplanes from the *Courageous*. It is probable that his own submarine was sunk by depth-charges from the accompanying destroyers, although it was claimed in Germany that he returned to port.

The next day two Short "Sunderland" flying-boats on patrol picked up an S.O.S. message from the grain ship *Kensington Court*, which had been attacked by a submarine. They arrived in time to pick up the crew, who had taken to the boats; and while one flying-boat circled round to keep a lookout for the submarine, the other alighted by the ship's boat. By means of the collapsible rubber dinghy, which the flying-boats carry, they were able to transfer twenty men to one flying-boat and the remaining fourteen to the other.

One can imagine the surprise of these seamen as they stepped aboard the twenty-ton flying-ship (boat seems too small a name for such a vessel), with its two decks, rows of portholes, and many cabins, including a galley, its bunks and tables, wireless room, engineers' compartment, and many other things familiar enough on a ship of the sea, but not expected on a ship of the air. Even more surprising, perhaps, was the basket of carrier pigeons which is always carried by the Coastal Command flying-boats when on patrol over the sea. But the carrier pigeon earned his position as a member of the crew in the War of 1914. There are men who owe their lives to their carrier pigeon getting home with a message

giving their position, when their flying-boat was down on the North Sea disabled, and their wireless out of action.

Towards the end of September large numbers of German aeroplanes from the Polish campaign arrived on the Western Front. French war communiqué No. 34 announced that French and German fighters had been engaged in several fights. And another referred to the co-operation of the R.A.F. with the French Army of the Air.

The R.A.F. was also busy photographing the Siegfried Line and doing general reconnaissance work ; the aeroplane used being the Fairey " Battle," which was probably the first of our aircraft to go into action at the front. This type of machine was one of the first of the new generation of aeroplanes (a monoplane, metal covered, with retractable undercarriage, variable-pitch propeller, and 1,000-h.p. Rolls-Royce engine) to go into service in the R.A.F.

At all sorts of unexpected places behind the lines this ubiquitous aeroplane was to be seen, but only just seen ; hidden at the edge of a wood, or behind a hedge with branches spread overhead. It was easy to drive along the road right past an aerodrome without realizing that a squadron of these " Battles " was stationed there.

The difference between the wartime aerodrome in France in 1939 and that of 1918 was almost as great as the difference in the aeroplanes. In 1918 it was recognizable, from the air as well as from the ground, as an aerodrome ; a large landing-field, hangars, huts, and so on. In 1939 it would hardly be called an aerodrome, just a landing-field, and scattered about, round the edge of it and in neighbouring fields, were the aeroplanes. Cockpits, engines, and propellers covered with canvas ; camouflaged netting or light branches draped over and round the wings ; they could only be seen from the air by someone who knew just where to look for them and could come down low to do so.

Although this camouflage ensures that the aerodrome, for want of a better word, is unlikely to be bombed by the enemy, it also means that both the aeroplanes and the men who keep them in flying condition have a much harder job of work. It may be raining hard, the wings of the machines glistening with water and little rivers of it running down the folds in the engine cover ; or it may be freezing cold, with the windscreen frosted over and the ground as hard as iron. Whatever the weather, the aeroplane has to " take it " either flying or standing still ; and the airmen have to keep it airworthy. It says a great deal for our aeroplanes and for our " airmen " (which is the name in the Air Force for those who



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THE SINKING OF THE FREIGHTER *KANSINGTON COLLET* ONE LIVING BOAT TOOK 14 MEN FROM THE LIFEBOAT AND ANOTHER LIVING-BOAT PICKED UP THE REMAINING 20 MEN—THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY OF LIVING BOATS RESCUING SEAFARERS OF A SHIPWRECK

do the work on the ground) that the Royal Air Force was able to operate without any apparent loss of efficiency under such conditions.

To return to the Fairey " Battles." A squadron of five of them were out on a reconnaissance over a well-defended part of the Saar Valley. It was a clear day and to get away from the well-directed anti-aircraft fire they went up to 20,000 feet, where they would be nothing but tiny specks as seen from the ground. But the Germans evidently had particular reasons for objecting to this reconnaissance, because a squadron of nine Messerschmitt fighters appeared from behind a convenient cloud and attacked the " Battles," at the same time as another six appeared from a different direction. With three fighters to each one of our aeroplanes there was not much chance of survival for the " Battles." The " Battle " has a crew of three, the pilot (who has a fixed gun firing forward), the observer, and the rear gunner ; as with other single-engined bombers, there is no rear gun mounted below the fuselage. The Messerschmitt pilots therefore dived down at high speed, when they would be a difficult target to hit, and then zoomed up from below, where there was no gun to bear on them. At the end of half an hour's fighting three of the " Battles " had been shot down and one had made a forced landing, but most of the crews saved themselves by parachutes. The squadron leader's aeroplane alone was left, and his gunner succeeded in shooting down two Messerschmitts and (judging by the report) scaring the others away.

This was the first reported action in which our aeroplanes met with any appreciable opposition, and it showed the need for fighter escort, or else better armament for our reconnaissance aeroplanes.

By the end of the first three or four weeks of the war the Messerschmitt fighter had gained a considerable amount of publicity, especially in the absence of any reports of British fighters having been in action. English, French, German, and American fighters all have their own particular characteristics in detail, but the general arrangement is much the same for all. The Messerschmitt Me. 109 was designed by Prof. Willi Messerschmitt and built by the Bayerische Flugzeugwerke (B.F.W.) Company of Bavaria. A specially built version with a racing engine (which could develop, for a short time, about 1,800 h.p.) broke the world's speed record in April 1939, with a speed of 469 miles per hour. The latest type in service with the *Luftwaffe* in November 1939 had a Daimler-Benz water-cooled engine of about 1,100 h.p., which gave it a top speed of about 340 m.p.h., and the ability to climb to 36,000 feet. The wings and body are

made of duralumin (an aluminium alloy which is considerably stronger than aluminium) and the wheels retract into the wing. The wings have slots at the leading edge, which help to give extra lift to the wing at low speed and so reduce the landing speed. Its equipment includes a wireless sending and receiving set, oxygen-breathing apparatus for use at high altitudes, and in the pilot's cockpit is a mirror in which he can keep a lookout for any aeroplanes which may attack from behind.

The armament varies in different types, but most of them have two machine-guns in the cowlings above the engine, fitted with interrupter gear, so that the bullets do not hit the propeller blades. There is provision in each wing for a machine-gun or a shell-firing gun; and a shell-gun can also be mounted to fire through the hollow propeller boss. The alternative armaments could therefore be four machine-guns, or two shell-guns and two machine-guns.

The Messerschmitt Me. 109 is a well-armed aeroplane, and is also said to handle very well in the air (which is in accordance with its designer's reputation). In the hands of a skilled pilot it is a formidable weapon.

On September 26th a part of the British fleet, escorting home across the North Sea a damaged submarine, was attacked by a force of about twenty German aircraft; some being flying-boats and some dive-bombers. A good many bombs were dropped but there were no direct hits and no casualties. The attack was beaten off by anti-aircraft fire and by fighter aeroplanes from the accompanying aircraft carrier, with the loss of three German aircraft. It was not stated whether the anti-aircraft guns or the fighters were responsible for shooting down the enemy.

It was in this attack that the Germans claimed to have sunk the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal*. At one point in the engagement six bombers attacked but were driven off by fierce anti-aircraft gun fire. But one of them turned back again to the attack and dropped a big bomb so close to the side of the *Ark Royal* that she heeled over until the flying deck was nearly awash. To the bomber above it must have looked as though he had done the trick, and being under concentrated anti-aircraft gun-fire he had not the opportunity to circle round and observe the result.

This engagement cannot be considered as proof that the battleship has nothing to fear from the bomber; as the number and quality of the attacking aircraft were not such as would have been justified in a really serious attempt to destroy a part of our fleet. It is more likely that the attacking force of bombers and flying-boats was hastily assembled, to

take advantage of the unexpected presence of a portion of our fleet in the North Sea.

September 27th was noteworthy for the first raid of the war to reach the British Isles. A German raider bombed a destroyer off the Isle of May, in the Firth of Forth, without, however, scoring a hit. It must have been most annoying, to put it mildly, to fly five hundred miles across the North Sea, miss the target, and then fly back over those five hundred dreary miles again. This raid did not receive much publicity beyond an announcement by the Admiralty that the bomber failed to obtain a hit or do any damage. In fact, the more spectacular raid in the same district, about three weeks later, was actually described in some newspapers as the first air raid of the war.

Two days later the R.A.F. carried out a bombing attack on German naval vessels in the Bight of Heligoland. The attack, like that on the second day of the war, was pressed home at a low altitude, in spite of heavy anti-aircraft fire; and some of our aircraft failed to return. No information was given in London on the damage done to the German ships, or on the number of our casualties. The Germans claimed that no damage was done and that five out of six of the bombers were shot down.

On the night of October 1st another long-distance night reconnaissance flight was made and some of our aeroplanes dropped leaflets over Berlin. This flight over Berlin was made in cloudy weather, so that the navigator had no landmarks by which to check his course. When he reckoned he was over Berlin, he told the pilot to come down through the clouds, and they were picked up by the Berlin searchlights, which, however, they managed to evade.

On October 6th the Chief of the Air Staff, Sir Cyril Newall, visited France and gave an interview to the Press. Among other things he said :

“The R.A.F. is now well settled in France, with planes of every description—fighters, bombers, and observation squadrons. Some units are with the British Field Force, and some are working with the French Army. Lots more are coming later.

“Nor must the strength of the R.A.F. be underestimated. French air circles, who are always generous in their praise of the deeds of their British Allies, have given it as their opinion that the R.A.F. have established a supremacy in the air on the Western Front. It is too early to say whether this is so or not. Rather one should say that the R.A.F. and their Allies are on the road to establishing such a supremacy.”

This statement by the Chief of the Air Staff was the first official admission of the existence of British fighting aeroplanes on the Western Front, as up to that time there had been no British report of any having been in action. The French fighter aeroplanes, on the other hand, had seen a considerable amount of action, a good deal of it being in the course of their work of escorting reconnaissance aeroplanes.

On one of these expeditions nine French fighters fought fifteen Germans, and brought down three of them. One French pilot was shot down, but escaped by parachute, and was in the air again in another fight within a few hours.

In the first week of October there had been rumours of big troop movements at Aachen, near the Belgian frontier, and behind the fortifications near the Luxembourg frontier. So on October the 7th, two pairs of British aeroplanes made a daylight reconnaissance over the whole length of the German frontier from France to the North Sea, and then continued on over the sea to England, where their reports and their cameras provided the Staff with some extremely useful information. It was rather remarkable that they apparently met with no opposition from aircraft, and very little from anti-aircraft fire.

A prolonged attack was made by German aircraft on a British cruiser squadron in the North Sea on October 9th, and over a hundred bombs were dropped, without a direct hit. In this case some heavy bombers, as well as flying-boats, were used, and several were brought down by gun-fire. Here again, although more persistent than on the previous occasion, the Germans still did not throw the full possible weight of air offensive into the attack.

On October 10th the Secretary of State for Air, Sir Kingsley Wood, made his first statement in the House of Commons on the work of the Royal Air Force in the war.

Referring to the work of the Coastal Command, in co-operation with the Royal Navy and the Fleet Air Arm, he stated that aircraft had sighted submarines on seventy-two occasions and delivered thirty-four attacks, some of which were undoubtedly successful. He pointed out that the usefulness of the aircraft should not be judged upon submarine attacks alone. The fact that an aeroplane is present in the vicinity of a convoy is generally enough to stop the submarine taking any action, though the crew of the aeroplane might never see the submarine at all. Speaking of the supply of aircraft, he stated that the rate of aircraft production at the outbreak of war represented an achievement unprecedented in this coun-

try in time of peace. Plans had been made which would ensure that even that rate would be doubled in due course. He also informed the House that we were acting in full co-operation with France in many of our production plans.

The Air Minister announced the scheme, which His Majesty's Government had put forward, for the rapid expansion of the training organization for pilots, observers, and air gunners. This was, of course, an essential complement to the vast increase in aeroplane production; for, in spite of the complication of the modern service aeroplane, it takes longer to produce a fully trained pilot than to produce an aeroplane. This scheme, which had been accepted in principle by the Dominion Governments, was that each Dominion should establish and maintain flying-schools of its own for preliminary training, and that facilities for advanced training, apart from those available in Great Britain, should be mainly concentrated in Canada. He added that the Government of the Union of South Africa had decided that this scheme of training was not applicable to South African conditions, and that it intended to make the training of her pilots as complete as possible and to train her Air Force personnel at home.

The distinction between preliminary and advanced training may not be very clear until it is realized that the Air Force pilot really begins his useful training at the point where most private pilots consider they have finished. The ability to fly an aeroplane across country and land safely at the other end is just the essential minimum of achievement for the would-be Service pilot. Before he starts learning anything about air fighting he must be able to fly a service aeroplane so well that it has become second nature to him. Only then is he ready to learn to shoot, to perform the manœuvres necessary to air fighting, to fly in formation, and to carry out all of the numerous other accomplishments of the Royal Air Force pilot.

Monday, October 16th, was the beginning of a week of reconnaissance or bombing raids on the British Isles. In the morning several German aircraft reconnoitred Rosyth on the Forth Estuary; and in the afternoon a series of bombing attacks was made by two or three aeroplanes at a time. The bombing, in some cases, at any rate, seems to have been made from a fairly low height and was responsible for some casualties. As reported elsewhere in this volume, one bomb glanced off the bows of the cruiser *Southampton* and exploded in the water alongside, and splinters from another did damage on board the cruiser *Edinburgh*. A bomb aimed

at the destroyer *Mohawk*, which was returning from patrol, exploded in the water close by and caused twenty-five casualties to men on deck.

Anti-aircraft guns went into action ; fighters of the Auxiliary Air Force went up to attack the raiders, and shot down three of them, one other being brought down apparently by the anti-aircraft guns. Two enemy raiders were intercepted off the Isle of May, where the first raid had been made nearly three weeks before, and although driven down almost on to the sea, they managed to escape. Soon afterwards another raider was shot down in flames, over the sea near Dalkeith ; and within a quarter of an hour one was shot down near Crail. A third raider was destroyed later on.

This raid resulted in no appreciable damage to the Naval vessels attacked, but the raiders lost about one-third of their force without inflicting any losses on our fighters.

The next morning a bombing raid was made farther north, on Scapa Flow ; and two bombs damaged the *Iron Duke*. One raider was shot down. On the same afternoon the *Luftwaffe* made yet another raid, with ten aeroplanes, on the Orkneys. Another raider was lost.

The following day German aeroplanes made reconnaissance flights over Scapa Flow and two days later over the Firth of Forth ; presumably with the intention of photographing the results of the earlier raids.

The first attack on a convoy of merchant ships was made off the east coast on October 21st, when two raids were made on the same convoy at intervals of a few hours. In the morning six aircraft attacked and were fired on by the anti-aircraft guns of the escort ships ; R.A.F. fighters, summoned by wireless, also attacked the bombers and drove them off. In the afternoon a more ambitious attack was made, first by a formation of nine German aeroplanes, and later with a formation of twelve. In none of these attacks was a ship hit ; but in the afternoon raid our fighters, again summoned by wireless, brought down four out of the twelve German aircraft. It was learned later that three more German aircraft, which had been damaged by our fighters in the morning raid, came down in the North Sea, where their crews were rescued by neutral vessels.

Another convoy was attacked on the next day off St. Abb's Head (near the Firth of Forth). No damage was done to the convoy, and two more German aircraft were shot down.

During the week October 16th-22nd, the German attacks, in spite of considerable persistence, did no serious damage, and our fighters shot down at least fifteen enemy aircraft without any losses to themselves.

On October 18th Sir Kingsley Wood was flown over to France, where he visited squadrons of the R.A.F., and also a French fighter squadron. In a statement to war correspondents, who had been flown over to France a week earlier, he gave some account of the arrival of the R.A.F. in France. The greater part of the personnel and stores were transported from England by air, and for the first twelve days the various units of the R.A.F. in France were maintained and fed by air transport. Sir Kingsley Wood also referred to the existence of complete flying hospital units for the evacuation home of casualties.

At about this time it was announced that Air Vice-Marshal C. H. Blount, O.B.E., M.C., was the Air Officer commanding the Air Component of the Expeditionary Force in France. This unwieldy titled referred presumably to those squadrons of the R.A.F. which were specially equipped and trained for co-operation with the Army, being chiefly intended for photographic reconnaissance and artillery "spotting."

Night reconnaissance flights were made for the first time over Southern Germany in the last week of October, in exceptionally severe weather conditions. It was foggy over a great deal of the route, and so intensely cold that ice formed on the wings and the crews were frostbitten, numbed, and almost insensible. The rear gunner of one of these bomber-turned-reconnaissance aeroplanes had an amazing escape. After trying all heights, from 300 feet to 17,000 feet, for better weather conditions, the pilot found that one engine of his machine was failing; so he gave the order to his crew to jump with their parachutes. He saw each man jump, except the rear gunner, who was too far away to be seen, and then set the aeroplane in a steady glide and jumped overboard himself.

Meanwhile the rear gunner, at the tail-end of the bomber, was so numbed with cold that he had either not heard or had not understood the order from the pilot. Consequently the great bomber was gliding through the winter night, getting nearer and nearer the ground every second, and huddled in the stern was one solitary man, completely unconscious of the fact that he was the only man on board. Finally the bomber hit the ground with a crash; but the gunner, being right at the tail, escaped injury, and went to the front to help out the rest of the crew. It must have been a very shaken man who discovered that there was no crew on board.

On October 28th a German raider was brought down on British soil for the first time in the war, on the Lammermuir Hills, near Dalkeith. It was a twin-engined Heinkel bomber with a crew of four; but on this

occasion it was on a reconnaissance flight over the Firth of Forth, and not a bombing raid. Flying at a considerable height, it was attacked by pilots of the Auxiliary Air Force in Supermarine "Spitfire" eight-gun fighters.

The German crew put up a fight which earned the admiration of our pilots, for they did not give in until their aeroplane was forced down right on to the ground, with one engine out of action, one gunner dead, and the pilot and another gunner wounded. The fire power of our fighters was well demonstrated by the way in which the Heinkel was riddled with bullet holes.

In spite of being badly wounded, the pilot said, in quite good English, to the policeman who first arrived, "We surrender as prisoners of war. Please see to my gunners in the back of the aircraft."

On the Western Front reports from the French Army of the Air stated that up to October 20th 250 daylight reconnaissance flights had been made and seventy-four by night. There had been many battles between French escort fighters and German fighters, in which the German losses were twenty-four aeroplanes and the French only eight.

The two types of fighters mostly used by France at the beginning of the war were the Morane-Saulnier 406, built by a firm whose aeroplanes were famous in the War of 1914, and the Curtiss Hawk from America. The Morane, like many other French fighters, has an Hispano-Suiza *moteur canon*, in which the shell-firing gun is built in with the engine. It also has a machine-gun mounted in each wing. With an 860-h.p. engine it has a top speed of over 300 m.p.h. A later type with a 1,200-h.p. engine achieved a speed of approximately 320 m.p.h., but was not then in general use in the Service. The Curtiss Hawk, with a Pratt & Whitney air-cooled engine of nearly 1,000 h.p.h., had a top speed of about 317 m.p.h. and was equipped with an armament of four (or in the later types six) machine-guns. Both these fighters, although not quite so fast as the best contemporary German aeroplanes, were slightly easier to manoeuvre and were certainly very effective at their work, judging by the results achieved.

The small shell-firing gun was a development in which the French Air Ministry had been interested for several years before the start of the war; and it had been fitted in several different fighters. The advantage of a gun firing small shells is that it is effective at a greater range than a machine-gun, and that when the shell hits an aeroplane and explodes, it is certain to do some serious damage; whereas an aeroplane can be quite

considerably shot about with machine-gun bullets without being seriously inconvenienced.

The shell-gun required more accuracy in aim than an aeroplane with four or eight machine-guns ; but the French pilots, who have had most experience with the shell-guns, seemed to make very good shooting.

Although the French adopted the shell-gun (or *canon* as they call it) first, and have actually used it in action, the Messerschmitt fighter was designed to take a shell-gun as an alternative to two machine-guns.

Although there had been no report of the use of shell-guns in R.A.F. fighters, it is worth recalling a statement made by Sir Kingsley Wood in the House of Commons in the spring of 1939. He said that, although he was quite satisfied that present multi-gun fighters could shoot down any type of bombers, experience had shown that with modern systems of construction a great many machine-gun bullets can hit a bomber or another fighter in a non-vital spot without putting it out of action. He added that the possibility of adapting, if necessary, existing fighter types for the use of *canon* was being actively considered.

At about this time some of the Territorial anti-aircraft batteries arrived in France, where they were to be used for the defence of the R.A.F. aerodromes. In view of past incidents it was interesting to note that each gun crew had a "recognition officer," who was specially trained to distinguish between German and Allied aeroplanes.

The first German aeroplane to be brought down by our fighters on the Western Front was a Dornier twin-engined bomber, on a reconnaissance flight. It was the last day of October with patches of cloud in the sky, and two enemy aeroplanes were spotted high up on the French side of the lines. When our fighters attacked, one of the Germans managed to escape into the clouds ; but one of our fighter pilots, using the clouds to cover his approach, managed to get within close range of the other German without being seen. From behind and slightly below, where he was out of sight of the rear gunner of the German aeroplane, he manœuvred until his sights came on.

Then with a crash the eight machine-guns opened fire, riddling the bomber from end to end. The Dornier banked steeply and, with engines still roaring at full power, spun down to bury itself in the earth far below.

This was the first of a number of successful attacks by the R.A.F. fighters on high-flying German reconnaissance aeroplanes. The fact that several enemy aircraft of this kind were shot down by our fighters, all within a few days of each other, would seem to indicate that this was the

first time our fighters had been in action on the Western Front. The German pilots, used to the somewhat slower French fighters, were probably caught unawares by the greater speed and climb of the Hawker "Hurricane."

One morning some Heinkel bombers came over the lines at about 20,000 feet. A fighter squadron on the ground was given the alarm and went roaring up after the enemy. Twenty thousand feet is a pretty big start, and one pilot went on climbing and chasing the enemy for nearly a hundred miles before he got within range ; but he eventually shot down a bomber, which crashed in Belgium.

One of the other pilots described how the rear gunner of the German aeroplane opened fire on him as he was closing in to short range, but without hitting anything vital. Then he in turn brought his eight guns into action and saw the bullets hit the fuselage of the Heinkel. The rear gunner crumpled up, smoke began to pour out, one engine stopped, and the aeroplane began to fall out of control. But the pilot regained control and managed to make some sort of a landing, although not without damage to his aeroplane ; he was taken prisoner and his gunners sent to hospital. The fighter pilot, asked for his comments, said, " Once you are in the air . . . you think of only one thing—the other fellow will get you if you don't get him."

On another occasion a squadron of nine Hawker " Hurricanes " had gone up to intercept some high-flying German reconnaissance aeroplanes, but did not succeed in finding them. The pilots, having climbed all the way up there, decided to stay on patrolling the sky on the chance of finding some more of the enemy. One of the pilots, a young man from New Zealand, was flying along at about 18,000 feet when he saw the smoke puffs of anti-aircraft shells about 8,000 or 9,000 feet higher. He opened the throttle wide and climbed in that direction, where he saw the raider, again a twin-engined Dornier monoplane. At that height of 27,000 feet the aeroplanes would have been invisible from the ground, and it was some indication of the efficiency of the Dornier and its engines that it was able to reach such a height, even if it was only carrying cameras instead of bombs.

The " Hurricane " pilot attacked from behind and below and fired three bursts from his guns. He lost height somewhat from this attack and had to climb up again to get within range, whilst the German rear gunner also tried a little shooting, but not very successfully. This time the fighter pilot opened fire with his eight guns and kept his enemy in his

sights and his fingers on the triggers until all his ammunition was used up. For a few seconds the Dornier continued straight on and our pilot thought it had escaped. Then down went one wing, the bomber went into a steep spiral and then into a straight dive, faster and faster towards the earth. Nearly 30,000 feet below, in the main street of a little French village, that bomber and its crew ended their flight ; just a deep hole in the ground filled with an inextricable mixture of smashed-up metal and what had been three human beings, and over it a pall of black oily smoke.

On November 6th the biggest air battle of the war, up to that time, was fought over the Western Front. Accounts vary as to the number of aeroplanes involved, but there were apparently nine French fighters and fifteen to twenty-seven German Messerschmitts. One version of the start of this battle was that the *Luftwaffe* tried to make a show of strength by parading three squadrons of fighters together along the front, and that they were immediately attacked by a squadron of French fighters. In spite of their inferiority in numbers, the French pilots, without any losses to themselves, succeeded in shooting down seven of the Germans in French territory and two more which crashed in flames behind the German lines. In this case the increased speed of the German fighters was to a certain extent counterbalanced by the extra manœuvrability of the French aeroplanes.

A noteworthy point which applies more particularly to individual combat than to bombing is the character and training of the pilot. Even assuming the same quality of technical training for enemy pilots as for those of the Allies, the German who has been for several years under the Nazi régime is at a definite disadvantage. The State does everything possible to prevent him thinking for himself, and discourages any inclination to show individuality. As it has taken some years to produce this state of mind in the German youth, so it will take years to eradicate it.

This air battle was followed later in the day by more fighting over the Saar Valley. Two of the French pilots who had been in the big battle met and attacked half a dozen German fighters over Saarlouis and drove them off. Another fight was said to have been started by an R.A.F. pilot, who unwittingly acted as a decoy. He had chased a German bomber far into Germany, and was returning home, when he saw a squadron of fighters also on the way home and flew to join them. When he got close to the formation he saw that they were not "Hurricanes," but Messerschmitts. With the throttle wide open and the aeroplane in a slight dive he raced from the frontier with the Messerschmitts in full pursuit. The

German pilots, intent on the solitary R.A.F. fighter, did not notice a French squadron above them. This squadron fell upon the Germans and effectively dispersed them.

It was announced that the British High Command in France had taken precautions against any attempt by parachute troops to attack important military objectives behind the lines. The likelihood of such an attack in the military sense was remote, for in daytime it could be broken up before it had reached the ground, and at night it would be impossible for individuals to find each other or their weapons (the weight of which would necessitate their being dropped by separate parachutes). The dropping of spies and of single individuals specially equipped for some serious operation of sabotage was, however, a possibility ; and one that it was right to guard against. In the War of 1914 spies were landed in Germany at night in isolated parts of the country, sometimes by the aeroplane itself coming down and then taking off again, sometimes by parachutes made of black silk which would not show up at night.

Another bombing attack was made on our naval vessels in the North Sea on November 8th ; no damage was done to the ships, which included two Polish destroyers, and the damage to the enemy was not known.

At the headquarters of the Coastal Command a wireless message was received one day from one of the pilots on patrol that he had made contact with the enemy ; and a minute later came the message, " I have destroyed one enemy seaplane." On return from patrol the pilot sent in the following report :

" The fight took place at a height of approximately 100 feet (due to low clouds). I was carrying out my patrol when the enemy came out of the clouds above and behind me. He endeavoured to get on my tail. I then did a steep turn until finally the enemy aircraft appeared in my sights. My air gunner and I both got in bursts at close range. The enemy seaplane then dived into the sea and sank, leaving only two floats and a parachute on the surface."

An aircraft of the Coastal Command was also involved in two successive fights with German flying-boats whilst on patrol. In the first case the German was flying fairly low down over the water. The R.A.F. pilot dived to the attack and several bursts from his machine-guns could be seen to enter the engines and rear part of the hull of the German flying-boat. He climbed and then dived to the attack again, putting the Ger-

man gunner out of action. After the fifth diving attack the flying-boat was seen to be going down partly out of control.

Meanwhile the rear gunner of the R.A.F. machine had seen another German flying-boat coming up to the attack, but our pilot finished off the first flying-boat before turning to attack the newcomer. He made two attacks and put the German's front guns out of action, by which time the ammunition of his own front guns was used up. So he made several steep turns to give his rear gunner a chance at the German. In this he was successful, and several bursts of fire struck the engines and wings of the flying-boat. Finally the rear gunner also ran out of ammunition and our pilot turned for home, the German also, apparently, having had enough for the day.

By the middle of November the concentrations of German troops near the frontier of Holland, which had been continuous for the past four weeks, had assumed even more serious proportions. Still no air action was taken to destroy the enemy. The occupation of Holland would have given Germany bases for submarine and air attack against Great Britain. With aerodromes so close to the English coast it would have been possible to send fighter escorts to protect the German raiders. On the other hand, it would have opened up the war and given a much wider stretch of country through which Germany could be attacked, beside the 120 miles of sea frontier between the Dutch frontier and Schleswig-Holstein.

German bombers, used like our own as long-range reconnaissance aeroplanes, continued to make occasional flights over England and Scotland. On November 17th one appeared over the Liverpool and Manchester district, where it was attacked by anti-aircraft gun-fire and by fighter aeroplanes. It was driven out to sea over the Irish Channel, but was not brought down. About a month later aerial photographs of the Liverpool docks (among others) were printed in various periodicals in this country, with a statement that they had been taken by German raiders.

On November 13th German aeroplanes raided Paris. They flew very high and no bombs were dropped. In the afternoon there was another raid, again without any bombs being dropped. It is possible that these raids were for photographic reconnaissance or to find out the strength of the defence of Paris against air attack.

The same day as the raid on Paris, a German submarine was sunk by a French aeroplane from the aircraft carrier *Bearn*. The pilot was on patrol over one of the Atlantic trade routes, and was nearing the end of his patrol at dusk when he saw a German submarine come to the surface. He dived

on the submarine. The submarine did some diving also, but not quite quickly enough, and the pilot dropped a depth-charge over the place where the submarine submerged. The discharge of air bubbles and huge patches of oil on the surface told of another U-boat destroyed.

Bombs were dropped on British soil for the first time in the war when German raiders appeared over the Shetland Islands on November 13th. Very little damage was done, and the raiders were not intercepted by fighter aircraft probably because of the bad weather, which restricted visibility. The Shetland Islands are a separate group, considerably farther north than the Orkneys, and were used as a flying-boat base, presumably for the patrolling of the northern exit from the North Sea to the Atlantic. About a week later another raid was made by six bombers, when they attacked some of our flying-boats on the water and sank one of them.

The night of November 21st-22nd saw the beginning of another week of German air activity in a new form against this country. In this case it was the laying of mines from the air. The raiding seaplanes came in low down over the Thames estuary, where searchlights and anti-aircraft guns came into action against them, one raider being shot down off the coast of Essex. Two alternative methods of laying the mines were apparently used. In one case the seaplane came down, alighted on the sea, and then dropped the mine. In the other case it dropped the mine while flying just above the water.

Mines were also reported to have been dropped from the air into the estuary of the Humber and off the east coast, close enough inshore to be seen from the sea front at night. One eyewitness stated that a plane appeared, flying very low, and he saw two objects fall from it into the sea. At another east coast town the raiding seaplanes flew so low that the light in the cockpit could be seen, and objects were seen to drop from the aircraft into the sea.

The idea of dropping mines from the air, although a new and startling method of warfare, was not such a menace as it might seem at first. Mines are not only very heavy but very bulky, compared with a seaplane. Limitations of lift and drag are such that, even on a specially constructed seaplane, it would hardly be possible to carry more than two, or at the very most four, mines on one seaplane. This means that aircraft cannot be used to lay such large numbers of mines as would be required to form a proper minefield, but can be used for laying a comparatively small number at certain strategic points. The necessity for the minelayer to fly low

makes it more vulnerable to attack from the air and from anti-aircraft guns, and the need for moonlight to see that the mines are being laid in the right place also increases the chances of the raider being seen and attacked.

A week after the aerial minelayers first raided the Thames estuary, Bristol "Blenheim" long-range fighters attacked their base in the East Frisian Islands. The Air Ministry issued a statement (dated November 28th) :

" This afternoon one of our long-range fighter patrols, which had been sent out for enemy minelaying seaplanes, reconnoitred the seaplane base at Borkum and there found and attacked with machine-gun fire three of these seaplanes. Our fighters were engaged by heavy anti-aircraft fire, to which they replied. All our aircraft have returned safely."

The attack was made late in the afternoon, and by taking cover in the clouds the raiders took the Germans by surprise. The squadron split up into four flights of three aeroplanes each and made a low-flying attack, machine-gunning seaplanes on the slipways and gun crews on the hangar roofs, as well as patrol boats.

Important photographic reconnaissance flights were made on November 25th by the R.A.F. over North-West Germany, including Wilhelmshaven and Heligoland. The weather was very bad, with heavy rain, snow and ice, low clouds, and electric storms. In spite of these conditions the pilots and navigators successfully accomplished their task. One pilot, flying low, was able to take the defence momentarily by surprise. He was above Wilhelmshaven with his camera in action before the ground batteries could open fire; within a few seconds of his arrival he was subjected to an intense barrage of " flaming onions " and pom-pom shells, which burst in groups of red, black, and orange-coloured smoke, and the pilot had to resort to violent manœuvres to escape. Only one fighter was encountered, and he was easily avoided in the clouds.

There had been rumours that, as a result of the low-flying bombing and reconnaissance raids, barrage balloons were being flown over some of the German naval bases. This was corroborated, to a certain extent, by the arrival on our side of the North Sea of a derelict German barrage balloon which had broken adrift from its moorings. The Germans had laughed at the balloon barrage around London, but after the start of the war adopted it themselves.

On the night of November 27th-28th more reconnaissance flights were

made over North-West Germany, and the crew of an Armstrong Whitworth "Whitley" twin-engined bomber had a most remarkable experience. Whilst flying over Germany at about 2,000 feet the two pilots saw a blinding yellow flash, followed by a big bang; whether it was lightning or an anti-aircraft shell, they never discovered. The aeroplane began to lose height rather quickly, and the second pilot, who had gone to the main cabin, looked out and saw that most of the fabric covering on the top of the port wing and a good deal of the covering of the starboard wing had disappeared. To lighten the aeroplane, everything that could be thrown overboard was dropped, and the pilot by using all his force on the controls, to balance the difference in lift on the two wings, managed to bring his machine home and land safely.

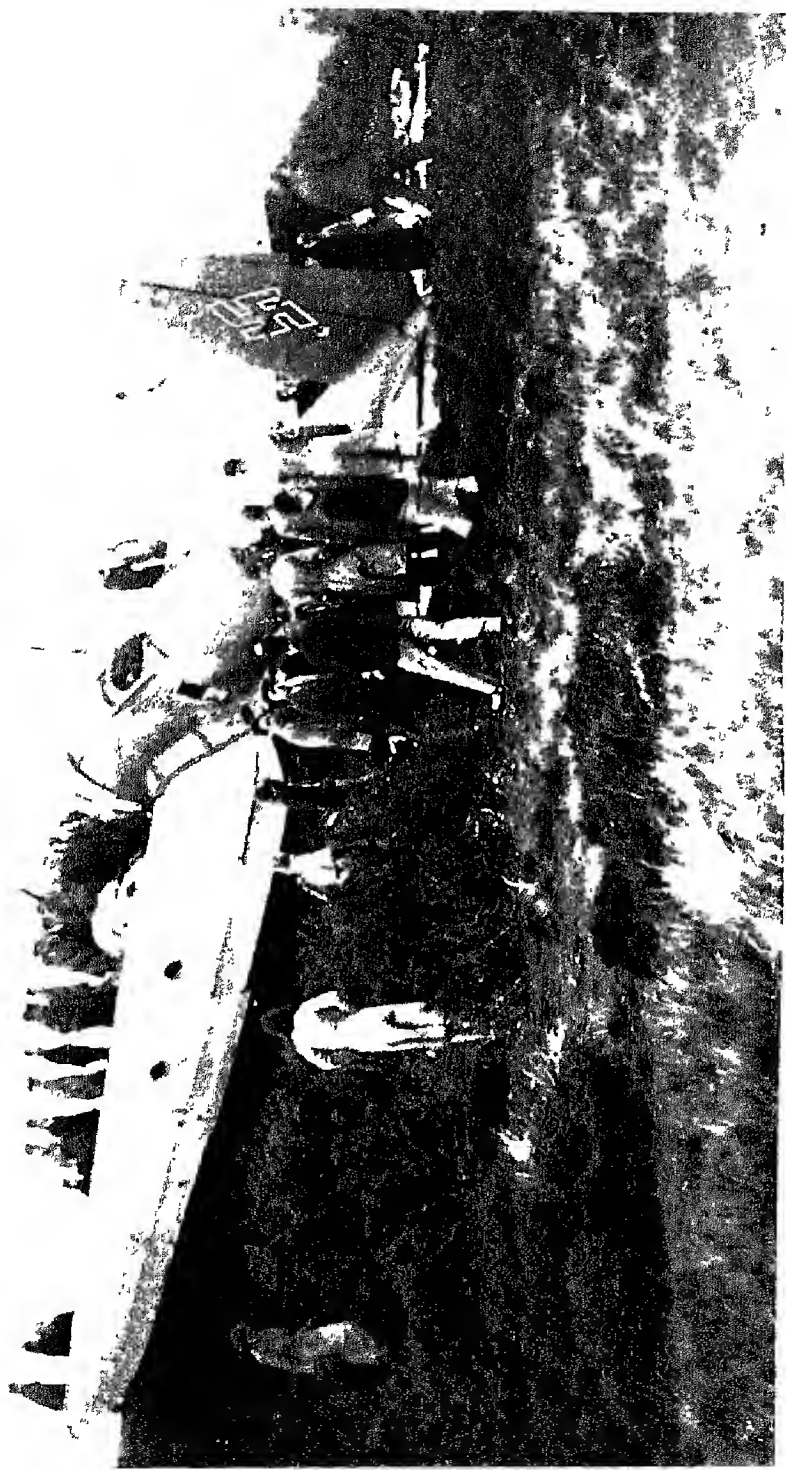
On the Western Front one of the R.A.F. fighter pilots in a "Hurricane" learned a lesson in air fighting which nearly cost him his life. He attacked a Dornier bomber, disabled it, and after two of the crew had jumped overboard with their parachutes, he saw the pilot huddled in his seat, apparently dead. As soon as he had passed the bomber its pilot leaned forward to the front gun and gave a burst of fire which smashed the instrument board of the "Hurricane" and only just missed the pilot, so that he had to make a forced landing as well. The German pilot had been led to believe that the English would treat such a prisoner in a most ruthless manner, and he was somewhat overcome when he was given a dinner in the squadron mess.

The last days of November were notable for a considerable increase in the air fighting on the Western Front. One day French fighter pilots shot down one German reconnaissance aeroplane and two fighters; another day the R.A.F. shot down six reconnaissance aeroplanes. In all the Allies accounted for nineteen enemy aeroplanes in three days' fighting.

On the last day of November 1939 Russia, without declaring war, attacked Finland, and bombing raids were made on the capital, Helsinki, and on other towns. Helsinki and Hangoe were each bombed four times by twin-engined bombers and at least 100 civilians were killed. Incendiary as well as high-explosive bombs were used.

In spite of the fact that the Finnish Flying Corps had less than two hundred aeroplanes, compared with Russia's many thousands, it inflicted, with the help of the anti-aircraft guns, many casualties on the Russian bombers.

The Finnish Flying Corps had a few modern fighters, such as the Gloster "Gladiator" and the Fokker D.21, and also a squadron of Bristol "Blen-



THE FIRST GERMAN BOMBER TO BE BROUGHT DOWN IN THE BRITISH ISLES DURING THE WAR OF 1939. IT CRASHED IN SCOTLAND AND THE PILOT WAS TAKEN PRISONER

GERMAN BOMBER BROUGHT DOWN IN SCOTLAND

heim " light bombers. Finnish officers had been over to England for a course of training in the R.A.F., and the Flying Corps, although small, was very efficient and well trained.

To sum up the first three months of the war in the air :

On the Western Front the greatest activity had been in photographic reconnaissance work, of which both sides did a great deal. Most of the air fighting which had taken place was in the course of attacking and defending the reconnaissance aeroplanes. Except for a few raids in the Saar Valley, made by French bombers in the early days of the war, there had been no reports of any bombing by either side.

During the first month of the war the R.A.F. made many long-distance night flights, extending several hundred miles into Germany, but leaflets, not bombs, were dropped. Those flights were made at night, often in very bad weather, and cannot have had much value for reconnaissance purposes ; but they gave invaluable experience to the crews of the bombers. The *Luftwaffe* made quite a number of daylight reconnaissance raids, at a considerable height, over Great Britain, from which they gained undoubtedly much useful photographic information.

Such bombing activity as there had been was concentrated on the naval forces of the belligerents, either in harbour or on the open sea. The R.A.F. raid on Wilhelmshaven and Brunsbuttel was an example of this, and the fact that a battleship and a cruiser were severely damaged, in spite of very heavy anti-aircraft defence, gave encouragement to those who believed that the Air Arm could successfully attack warships. German air attacks on our Navy on the open seas were not so successful, partly owing to the difficulty of bombing a moving target, but mainly because the attacks were not made with sufficient weight. So the question of " battleship *v.* aeroplane " is still an open one.

No German bombs were dropped on French soil, although one or two reconnoitring raids were made over Paris. No attempt was made to bomb London, and what bombs were dropped in this country were aimed at such legitimate targets as naval vessels and flying-boat bases.

The air activity of the first three months of the war was not sufficiently great to justify any very definite conclusions except the rather obvious one, that this war was not a bit like what we had been led to expect. One piece of evidence which shows how completely different the war was from expectations was the use which each side made of big bombers for reconnaissance work. Designed to lift a couple of tons of bombs into the air, these bombers were called upon to lift a couple of cameras.

Only in the coastal patrols on anti-submarine and convoy work could the air war be said to have conformed more or less to expectation. That work had not been spectacular, but it had been colossal in amount, and had almost certainly reduced the submarine danger (which nearly lost us the war in 1917) to far smaller proportions than the Germans expected.

In the war started in 1939 the three most powerful air forces in the world were engaged, and yet for the first three months the total air activity was a negligible amount compared with that at the end of the War of 1914. This was no reflection on the air arm itself, which in most cases had performed the task allotted to it quite satisfactorily. Neither could it be taken to imply that the air arm was not such a powerful weapon as had been generally assumed. The examples of Abyssinia, China, Spain, and Poland have proved the contrary.

Yet it has to be recorded that beyond a few attacks on naval bases in Britain and Germany, and the bombing early in the war of a few objectives in the Saar Valley, the R.A.F., the *Armée de l'Air*, and the *Luftwaffe* for three months have devoted themselves mainly to reconnaissance and patrol work.

CHAPTER 5

THE DIPLOMATIC WAR

BY W. GORDON WILLIAMS

READERS of the chapter on "How the War Began" in Volume I, on the diplomatic exchanges with the Nazi Government in 1939 up to the declaration of war, will recall that Herr Hitler brazenly stated his theory of power-politics, the ruthless practice of which was to ruin Europe once more. According to the Führer, still gloating over memories of the Munich Conference, though you had to be strong for war, you ought to be still stronger for negotiation. This meant nothing else but the imposition of demands without having to fight, and he had some reason for believing that the British Government feared Britain's unreadiness in September 1938 to meet the ruthless employment of Germany's weapons of destruction, especially her much-vaunted and certainly great Air Force. It was still early in the days of Air Raid Precautions for the civilian populations of Britain and France, and the expansion programmes of British air and military power required more time yet, although both in the air and on land, in the form of mechanized forces, Britain was establishing a high standard of efficiency. In France, except possibly for the French Air Force, preparations had reached a point already where it must have seemed dangerous to Herr Hitler to provoke a war that necessitated the defeat of her western neighbour, but it can be seen from the German propaganda of self-justification, following the successive Nazi aggressions from the time of the invasion of Austria up to the invasion of Poland, that much was hoped from political division inside France.

The remarkable strength and unanimity of the Allies when at last they agreed to accept the challenge of the gangster of Continental politics were due in the first place to French realism and her insistence upon security some years before the challenge had been perceived in Britain by any but a few diplomats and publicists. French preparations had begun when Great Britain was still hoping for results from the Disarmament Conference, before she had settled the major problem of Germany's economic future or faced the conclusions implicated in the policy of the new Hitler régime.

But France had been increasingly alarmed by the successive unopposed acts of Germany to restore her former position as one of the great Powers, and the gradual awakening of France is a dramatic prologue to the international situation which existed in the spring of 1939, when France, with Britain, guaranteed Poland's integrity and independence. The rather sudden remilitarization of the Rhine area; the rapid increase, at first concealed by various devices, but soon openly avowed, of German rearmament under Herr Hitler's régime, carried an old lesson to French minds, and only the extreme elements of the Communist Party had any inclination to oppose French rearmament, although the first serious steps were actually taken at a time when Disarmament was still in the air.

In 1932 M. Pierre Cot, a Left-Wing Radical Deputy, noted with satisfaction the declaration of M. Tardieu, in his speech at Geneva, that France would unconditionally accept a limitation, but not a reduction, of her armaments. Light was thrown on this declaration by M. Auriol, a Socialist Deputy, in a speech in the Chamber during the February debate on the Budget. M. Auriol observed that, whereas French military expenditure in 1928 was 11,700,000,000 francs (£93,600,000 at par then), in the Budget they were discussing it was estimated at 17,100,000,000 francs (£136,800,000 at par), and the Budget figure was for only nine months. There was also "a large amount" of additional military expenditure dissimulated in the estimates for various civil departments. The French Government, he said, had been preparing for the Disarmament Conference for some time past by piling up armaments. He said that the creation of the Ministry of Defence was in accordance with logic.

At this moment, when France was returning to her former state of anxious preparation against German aggression, she possessed the greatest Air Force in the world, though it was destined to need rebuilding and was already becoming out of date in types of machines. Her army, apart from Colonial troops, was put at 464,000, with 40,000 others in the Air Service. Probably the true total of estimated expenditure on her three Services, military, naval, and air, for the last nine months of 1932 was about £100,000,000, or equal to a rate of £133,000,000 for a full year, which was nearly 90 per cent. in francs above the figure for 1913.

Expansion brought forward the problem of man-power. The French were confronted by the prospect of a drop in the number of young conscripts reaching the age for service—a consequence of her heavy losses in the previous war. In 1935 Marshal Pétain, supported by other leaders of opinion, began a strenuous campaign for the extension of the conscript's



THE LATE BONAR LAW



LORD BALDWIN
THREE RECENT BRITISH PRIME MINISTERS



EARL LATE RAMSAY MACDONALD

military service from one to two years. Under Article 40 of the law for conscription, the Government was authorized to retain serving conscripts for an additional period of six months in special circumstances. After heated debates on procedure, objection being taken to giving the Government any further authorization than this, a special measure was published doubling the term of military service during the "hollow years" of 1936-40, when the men born during the first Great War would be enrolled. It authorized the Government to retain with the Colours for an additional six months the recruits joining in April 1935, and for an additional twelve months every subsequent contingent till the end of 1940. The Government was also empowered to reduce the minimum age from twenty-one to twenty, and provision was also made in the Bill for an increase in the number of professional soldiers who remained voluntarily in the Army as "specialists" after their compulsory term. Radical opposition delayed the passing of the Bill, and meanwhile an extra six months' service was agreed upon by decree.

French politics being more complicated and local than British, this setback did not have the significance that it seemed to have. Waiting until the next municipal elections were over, the Government, led by M. Flandin, made the measure a question of confidence, and carried it by 354 votes to 210. It was revealed in the debate that the strength of the French Army was then below that of Germany, and the Premier gave the following figures for comparison :

	1935	1936
Germany	480,000	600,000
France	278,000	208,000

"Everything in the German organization," he pointed out, "had been arranged with a view to a surprise attack. If ever France appeared to be an easy prey, nothing would prevent Germany from springing upon her."

In September 1936 the French had been convinced of the menace from Germany, and the Council of Ministers authorized the expenditure of an extra £56,000,000 that year on strengthening French defences. It was intended to supplement this sum on a large scale in the succeeding four years, in addition to the yearly £180,000,000 for the Forces. M. Lebrun, the President, also signed a decree for £1,350,000 expenditure that year on new naval construction.

Many people in Great Britain in 1936 still thought the French were

scaremongering, but in retrospect it is enough to observe that the extra £56,000,000 they voted in September of that year was to enable the immediate extension of fortifications to be undertaken and the strengthening of the Maginot line of forts, so that it reached from the Belgian to the Swiss frontiers, a work originally estimated to cost £190,000,000. The extra provision was also to cover new mechanized divisions and further air expansion, particularly in the direction of renovation of the Air Force. M. Daladier, then the Minister of National Defence, stated :

“ No fair-minded man can dispute the right and duty of France to reorganize her defences when she sees a mighty neighbouring people, with whom she wishes only to maintain good relations, proceed to a positive industrial mobilization.”

And M. Paul Boncour, who represented France on the League of Nations, said :

“ For fifteen years France has pursued the organization of peace without for an instant justifying the suspicion that she wished to prepare for war. Insistent demands are made of us. To these, in the end, we accede, but perhaps some day we shall be asked for something which we shall be compelled to refuse, and that will be inevitable and unavoidable war.”

Herr Hitler should have taken the warning to heart. The seriousness of French efforts was reflected by a resolution passed in October 1936 by the congress of the Radical Party, in favour of military conscription for women. The idea was that women should be conscripted for administration service with the Army, Navy, and Air Force, to relieve men for fighting. And this resolution was one of the few on which there was any sign of general agreement at the Congress.

Early in 1937 the scandal of British and French betrayal of the Spanish people's Government, when the insurgent Franco's cause was being fought for him by Fascist and Nazi forces, had greatly strengthened Communist propaganda and Left-Wing sentiment in France, and the effects were being felt in France's industrial output. After fighting hard against reactionary forces, the workers had obtained a forty-hour week, but they also had begun to slow down production by passive resistance to the Government. It became obvious that delays in the delivery of munitions and armaments of all kinds were becoming serious and intolerable. Attacks were made on the forty-hour week, although production improved

under the stimulus of nationalist feeling ; the forty-hour week remained in force meanwhile.

In February of 1937 M. Cot, the Air Minister, announced plans to double the effective strength of the French Air Force, and quadruple its bombing capacity by the end of the year. He said that the number of planes had been increased by 37 per cent. in the previous six months, and that the Air Force was second only to that of the Soviet Union. At the same time M. Daladier announced that Germany had more than 1,000,000 under arms, with huge reserves. More motorized divisions were being added at once to the French Army, which could now put a total of 700,000 men into the field. Besides this 700,000 France had well-trained reserves by then of nearly 5,000,000 men.

The increasing efforts of France, logically and deliberately made in the fateful years preceding the second Great War, had a strangely dramatic effect. Stroke upon stroke France hammered at the anvil of her power, preparing for the coming test of strength. Like a metronome whose mighty beats marked the diminishing time of the insecure peace, her decisions were made and carried out, with the consequence that when German forces smashed their way into Poland over the prostrate people of Czecho-Slovakia, Poland's Ally could no longer be regarded by the most optimistic Nazi leader as less than an equal. On the sea and in economic resources she was the superior of Germany, whose Government must have listened to counsels of despair in regarding a pact with Soviet Russia as an answer to the renewal of Britain's alliance with France. For allied with the might of the British Empire, when war began again France was formidable indeed.

Behind the firmness of the British-French *démarches* to Germany in August 1939 were other factors of material power which ought to have given the Nazi Government pause. Besides the economic resources of the Allies, and their command of the seas to protect them, there was the prospect of supplies from America, and large orders had actually been placed in the United States for planes and equipment, the deliveries of which had only been interrupted by the imposition of the embargo on arms to belligerents. The opposing Governments showed by official pronouncements that they were keenly aware of the importance of American public opinion, though the verbal interventions of President Roosevelt left little doubt of the official American attitude. The chief of these undoubtedly was the President's last-minute appeals to Poland and Germany to negotiate instead of going to war, made in spite of certain know-

ledge accessible to the heads of States, that it was the Nazi Government which believed the moment had come for another coup while merely pretending to negotiate. The American Press and radio stations on August 26th published the text of a communication to Herr Hitler from President Roosevelt. This embodied (obviously for its publicity value) in full a communication just received by the President from President Moscicki. It was the Polish reply to President Roosevelt's appeal, and the reply—entirely satisfactory to American sentiments—stated :

“ I would like to emphasize that the Polish Government always considered direct negotiations between Governments as the most appropriate method of solving difficulties which may arise between States. . . . It was with this principle in view that Poland concluded pacts of non-aggression with Germany and the Union of Soviet Republics. We consider likewise the method of conciliation through a third party as disinterested and impartial as Your Excellency to be a just and equitable method in the solution of controversies arising between nations. . . .”

The Polish President added his

“ ardent wish that Your Excellency's appeal for peace may contribute towards general appeasement, which the people of the world so sorely need.”

After repeating the Polish reply, President Roosevelt continued his appeal to Herr Hitler in these terms :

“ Your Excellency has repeatedly and publicly stated that the ends and the objectives sought by the German Reich were just and reasonable. In his reply to my message the President of Poland has made it plain that the Polish Government is willing upon the basis set forth in my message to agree to solve the controversy which has arisen between the Republic of Poland and the German Reich by direct negotiation or through the process of conciliation. Countless human lives can yet be saved and hope may still be restored that the nations of the modern world may even now construct a foundation for a peaceful relationship if you and the Government of the German Reich will agree to the pacific means of settlement accepted by the Government of Poland. All the world prays that Germany will accept.”

While the message was sincere, in the sense that the United States not less than the Western Allies of Europe ardently preferred peace to the economic ruin of war, little hope of it was now entertained anywhere in

official circles, and the behaviour of Herr von Ribbentrop, described in the British White Paper, during the next few days plainly revealed the Nazi Government's inexorable determination to invade Poland, even if the full mobilization of the German armies and the previous heavy concentrations on Polish frontiers had not been sufficient evidence.

One of the immediate practical reactions of the United States Administration proved that they had no illusions. The War Department announced plans for the immediate strengthening of the A.A. defences of the Panama Canal and a considerable increase in the air corps personnel stationed there, for besides the possibility of having to guard against war on neutral shipping, in the eyes of the United States Japan was a potential ally of Germany. Japan had still to take the path of wisdom and openly disassociate herself from affairs in Europe and the famous Anti-Comintern Pact. That course was taken because Japan's resources were all needed in the Far East, and the announcement of the Nazi-Soviet Pact had been an unpleasant shock.

In Italy also this pact confirmed the Italian attitude of neutrality which had been obvious since the spring of 1939 to those who read between the lines of Signor Mussolini's increasingly reticent statements. It appeared as if all the world except Germany realized that the Nazi régime was heading for the destruction of German power. Everyone's chief anxiety was to escape as much as possible any part in the destruction. The Soviet Government, as will be seen, hoped to benefit directly by acquiring more defensive frontiers, and indirectly by the weakening of the Western Powers, whose offers of collaboration after their pact with Poland she had rejected in favour of the understanding with Germany.

The moment that the German forces had commenced their invasion of Poland, the President of the United States addressed a message to the Governments of Great Britain, France, Germany, Poland, and Italy, requesting an immediate reply to his appeal to each of them to

"affirm its determination that its armed forces shall in no event and under no circumstances undertake the bombardment from the air of civilian populations or of unfortified cities, upon the understanding that these same rules of warfare will be scrupulously observed by all of their opponents."

Before the German promise had been made, the German Air Force had already commenced the most ruthless air bombardment of military and civil targets ever planned and executed. All the Powers made replies suitable for American consumption, and certainly Britain and France had

no desire to excuse German bombing of open towns by starting any such futile destruction. Italy merely reiterated the former pronouncement of the Duce that she would take no initiative in commencing hostilities at all.

Meanwhile the British declarations had, before Germany began hostilities against Poland, affirmed the unanimity of British with French policy in resisting any attack upon Poland, especially emphasizing that the Non-Aggression Pact of Germany with the U.S.S.R., which the Nazi leaders appeared to believe would frighten off the Allies from intervention, would make no difference whatever to Allied action. The war had begun in a military sense, and was to be intensified in the sphere of national propaganda, which Germany had started in the early days of the Nazi régime.

The main onslaught of Nazi propaganda was to be directed against Britain along familiar lines, the gravamen of the charge being that Britain had been the undeviating opponent of a strong Germany. Herr Hitler, in his reply rejecting the ultimatum, asserted that

“ the National Socialist Government has endeavoured repeatedly since the year 1933 to remove the worst forms of coercion and violation of its rights contained in this Treaty (of Versailles). It was always, in the first instance, the British Government that, by its unbending attitude, prevented any practical revision,”

which, as the reader of earlier chapters will see, was clearly a distortion of the truth. Herr Hitler was reduced to the extravagant assertions that

“ the British Government gave the Polish State a blank cheque for any action against Germany which that State might intend to carry out. The British Government promised military help to the Polish Government unreservedly in the event of Germany's defending herself against any provocation or attack. Therefore the Polish terror assumed intolerable dimensions against the Germans living in territories torn away from Germany.”

And equally, of course, addressing the German nation, which must have viewed the prospect of another war against Britain and France, but especially Britain, with dismay, Herr Hitler brought up the “ encirclement ” of Germany by Britain. A strong card was the Treaty of Versailles, from which their Führer had delivered them, which would

“ sooner or later have exterminated 20 million Germans. I undertook to mobilize the resistance of the German nation against this and to assure work and bread for them. I have many times



SIGNOR MUSSOLINI
ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER

offered England and the English people the understanding and friendship of the German people. I have always been repelled. I had for years been aware that the aim of these war inciters had for a long time been to take Germany by surprise at a favourable opportunity. I am more determined than ever to beat back this attack. Germany shall not again capitulate. There is no sense in sacrificing one life after another and submitting to an even worse Versailles dictate."

And then the menacing Nazi warning against dissentients at home, mixed with promises of freedom from corruption, and of economic equality which the Nazi régime had already appallingly negated in every department of the national life. The defence of Germany

"necessitates the most thorough measures and imposes on us one law above all others : If the soldier is fighting at the front, no one shall profit by the war. If the soldier falls at the front, no one at home shall evade his duty. As long as the German people was united it has never been conquered. It was the lack of unity in 1918 that led to collapse. Whoever offends against this unity need expect nothing else than annihilation as an enemy of the nation. If our people fulfils its highest duty in this sense, then God will help us, Who has always bestowed His mercy on him who was determined to help himself."

Addressing the French Senate, on the same fateful day that Mr. Chamberlain was addressing the House of Commons, the President, M. Lebrun, told them :

"You have met at a critical moment of our national life. War has broken out in Central Europe, men are killing each other, innocent victims fall, machine-gunned from the air. Two peoples had differences to settle. They could have done that by free and loyal negotiations, as they were advised to do from all sides. At the moment when their plenipotentiaries were about to meet, Germany brutally attacked Poland, thus creating a state of war which nothing could justify. Britain and France, resolutely attached to a policy of prudence, wisdom, and moderation, have done everything humanly possible to avert this crisis. For some days past our young men have been mounting guard on the frontiers, and today general mobilization summons all our forces to the defence of the country."

Owing to her thorough preparations, France's mobilization within a fortnight of the start of hostilities had brought 5,000,000 under arms behind the protection of her mighty fortifications on the Western Front

and while large German forces were smashing their way into Poland. The citizens of France were conscious of this as they listened to M. Daladier broadcast an address to the nation that same day :

“ Frenchwomen and Frenchmen, since September 1st, at the dawn of day, Poland has been the victim of the most brutal and cynical of aggressions. Her Army is heroically resisting the invader. The responsibility for bloodshed rests wholly on the Hitlerite Government. The fate of peace was in the hands of Hitler. He has willed war. France and Great Britain have multiplied their efforts to save peace. Even this morning they made an urgent *démarche* in Berlin, addressing a last appeal to reason to the German Government, and asking that a halt should be called to hostilities and peaceful negotiations opened. Germany met us with a refusal. She had already refused an answer to all the men whose voices have been raised in these last few days in favour of world peace. She thus wishes for the destruction of Poland, so as to be able later to ensure the domination of the whole of Europe and the enslavement of France. By standing up against the most horrible of all tyrannies and by making good our word, we are fighting to defend our land, our homes, and our liberty. I have worked without respite against war up to the last minute, and my conscience is clear. I salute with emotion and affection our young soldiers who are now going to accomplish the sacred duty which we ourselves have carried out. They can have confidence in their leaders, worthy of those who have already led France to victory. The cause of France is linked with that of justice. It is that of all peaceful and free nations. It will be victorious.”

Meanwhile the people of the British Empire heard their King-Emperor make his soul-stirring Broadcast speech.

Not less impressive than the long-deliberated preparedness of France when war broke out was the display of unanimity in the British Empire. Loyal messages had already been sent to the King or the Prime Minister during the crisis immediately preceding the declaration of war, and after the declaration messages arrived more numerous and more emphatically offering the collaboration of the great self-governing Dominions, and other members of the Empire, including the most varied countries and political systems, from the vast Indian Empire to the “ protected ” Tonga Islands. Within a week the whole Empire had declared itself at war with Germany, even including South Africa, where a strong division had been expected. Under the leadership of General Smuts the loyalist sentiment of the majority resulted in the defeat of General Hertzog’s policy of neutrality.

General Smuts's answer to Mr. Hertzog in the Union Parliament on September 4th contained arguments which illustrate the general point of view throughout an Empire that was held together by the sentiment and self-interest of its members, and not by force :

" I am profoundly convinced that although Danzig and the Polish Corridor were the immediate occasion of war, the real issue goes far beyond Danzig and Poland and touches South Africa. General Hertzog has made a statement which I regard as resembling a complete justification of Herr Hitler. I do not think that the people of the Union, in their vital interest as South Africans, could hope to justify that view. Nothing could be more fatal for South Africa, poor as it is in defence, and rich as it is in resources, than to disassociate itself directly or indirectly from its friends in the Commonwealth. It is not only a question of loyalty and self-respect, which I assume we all feel deeply ; it is a question of importance and of the deepest interest to the future of South Africa. If we dissociated ourselves deliberately and conspicuously from the line of action taken by the other members of the Commonwealth, we are going to get what we deserve, and the day will come—and it will not be far off—when the same treatment will be applied to us. And when the day of trouble comes—when the German demand for the return of South-West Africa is made at the point of the bayonet—we shall stand alone."

General Smuts had been one of the signatories of the Treaty of Versailles, in spite of his strong disapproval of it and his prophecies of its evil consequences. His position in the new crisis was due to the sense that whatever injustices had been committed in the past, the revived imperialism of Germany under a tyrannous and completely immoral régime was a menace to the peaceful development of all countries. The other Dominions were emphatically united against Germany, and lost no time in offering contributions, military and economic, to the conduct of the war. In spite of the dissidence of Congress in India, which was very dissatisfied by the postponement of further constitutional reforms towards the Government's promised Dominion status and their own claim of an impracticable complete independence for India, even Mr. Gandhi promptly gave his moral support to Britain as against Nazi oppression, and the overwhelming majority of India, through leaders of the big minorities and more than two hundred native Princes, offered every kind of help in the war. Eventually the great Congress Party announced that it would resume its policy of non-co-operation in protest against the holding up of further constitutional reforms during the period of the war. It was

unfortunate that the Government should have found it necessary to disappoint the more progressive political elements in India by their decision, but considering the extremely controversial aspect of the proposed reforms, which were opposed by powerful sections of Indian life, it is difficult to see how they could avoid it without risking serious divisions in India during the progress of the war, when the utmost help of the loyal parties might have to be called upon. There too it was felt, in the words of Sir Jagdish Prasad, Leader of the Upper House, that "India's fate will be decided on the battlefields of Europe."

Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, was well justified in observing that "nothing could be more significant than the unanimity of approach of all in India—princes, leaders, great political parties, the ordinary man and woman." Once more our own mistakes had been made unimportant by comparison with the kind of menace that Germany stood for, and a little later in the autumn the Empire's verbal declarations were being supplemented by acts. An imaginatively striking symbol of its unity of purpose was the assembly of delegates from the Dominions and India in London at the close of October, to confer with the British Cabinet on the best means of contributing assistance. The finishing touch to this demonstration was a tour of the Western Front in France by the delegates in November, accompanied by Mr. Anthony Eden, the Dominions Secretary.

This unity of the British Empire, supported by American sympathy, may be said to have made the Allies' cause invulnerable, but a fierce political debate in the United States, and much Nazi propaganda intended to blacken the policy of Great Britain, accompanied the early stages of the war before the air was cleared. In the United States, where strong anti-Nazi sentiment had been developing since the Munich crisis a year earlier, the President followed up his last-minute messages to the heads of the European States with a broadcast to Americans on September 3rd, which provided another interesting comparison with the various declarations of national spokesmen. It combined the American desire for a strict neutrality (which was well understood to be in effect favourable to the maritime Powers) with a fairly frank avowal of the general feeling that they were on the side of the Allies.

"It seems clear, even at the outbreak of this Great War, that the influence of America should be consistent in seeking for humanity a final peace which will eliminate as far as possible the continued use of force. Passionately though we may desire de-

tachment, we are forced to realize that every word coming through the air, every ship at sea, every battle fought, affects the American future. Let no man or woman thoughtlessly or falsely talk of America sending its armies to European fields. A proclamation of American neutrality is being prepared at this moment. This would have been done even if there had been no statute, because such proclamation is in accordance with international and American policy. I trust that our neutrality can be made a true neutrality. I cannot prophesy the immediate economic effect of this new war on our nation, but I do say that no American has the moral right to profiteer at the expense of his fellow-citizens or of the men, women, and children living and dying in the midst of war in Europe. Most of us in the United States believe in spiritual values. Most of us, regardless of what Church we belong to, believe in the spirit of the New Testament—that great teaching which opposes itself to the use of armed force, of marching armies, of falling bombs. The overwhelming masses of our people seek peace—peace at home, and the kind of peace in other lands which will not jeopardize peace at home. This nation will remain a neutral nation, but I cannot ask that every American remains neutral in thought as well. Even a neutral has the right to take account of the facts; even a neutral cannot be asked to close his mind or his conscience. I have said, not once but many times, that I have seen war, that I hate war. I say again that so long as it remains within my power to prevent it, there will be no black-out of peace in the United States.”

The official proclamation of American neutrality to which President Roosevelt referred was actually published two days later, and the big political subject of debate in the United States became that of removing the Arms Embargo, which was considered now as an infringement of neutrality, since it favoured a great land Power like Germany and prevented the maritime Powers, Britain and France, from benefiting by their command of the sea to import whatever materials they needed and could purchase. In the United States, as in Britain, a considerable amount of muddled pacifist sentiment still refused to accept the war as inevitable, though it offered no alternative except ardent prayer and fresh attempts to start reasonable talks with the people who were busy in crushing Poland. Pacifism in the United States was also mixed up with anti-Roosevelt politics, and this motive was behind a good deal of the opposition at first voiced to the removal of the Arms Embargo clauses of the Neutrality Law. However, the very German method of opening the war against the Allies by sinking the Atlantic liner *Athenia* without warning, and then issuing the ingenious explanation that it had been sunk on the

orders of Mr. Winston Churchill, the newly appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, in order to influence American opinion against Germany and drag America into the war, ensured the ultimate recruitment of American sympathy for the Allies. The U-boat warfare against defenceless shipping held vivid memories of the previous war, in which the sinking of the *Lusitania* was a decisive factor in forcing American public opinion to the point where President Wilson had to abandon American neutrality.

The *Athenia*, which was torpedoed about 200 miles off the Hebrides the first day of the war, contained 314 American passengers bound for home, and for a week it was uncertain how many had lost their lives. At the same time, the indignation against Germany for the ruthless invasion of Poland was deepened by the testimony of the American Ambassador at Warsaw, Mr. Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, whose reports on the German methods of carrying on warfare effectively knocked the bottom out of the official Nazi news propaganda. For example, the State Department on September 3rd issued a statement that Mr. Biddle had reported

“ that shortly before 9 o'clock this morning, at Constanza, a German bomber in a power dive dropped six heavy bombs, one of which seriously damaged a villa adjacent to that of the Ambassador. An incendiary bomb struck in the grounds of the Ambassador's villa, but failed to explode. Neither the Ambassador nor members of his family, all of whom were in the villa at the time, were injured. Constanza is about eight miles outside Warsaw.”

Mr. Biddle's subsequent reports had worse deeds to recount, but this initial report was rather significant, as it plainly suggested an attempt to bomb the American Embassy, which had moved away from any possible objective of bombers.

There is no doubt that a lively section of the American public was ahead of the Administration in its strong pro-Ally feeling, and that only the rather rigorous terms of the Neutrality Law prevented large-scale volunteering for service with the armed Forces, as occurred before American intervention during the previous Great War. It was said then that Canada had been invaded by a host of young men from the United States who had all of a sudden discovered some flaw in their birth certificate. They had been born somewhere in Canada, and not, as their parents had led them to believe, in the land of the Stars and Stripes. As a result of this singularly timed discovery, these young men at once joined the Canadian Army and Air Force, and indeed, so ran the legend

later, the Canadian Flying Corps at one time in the War of 1914 included as many Americans as Canadians. As soon as President Wilson had taken the decisive but belated decision to enter the war, the confidence of American youth in the accuracy of birth certificates was re-established with as strange a suddenness as it had been lost. Behind the legend remained the indisputable fact of a deep feeling of solidarity between the youth of America and of Britain and France, and though there was no doubt that the United States officially meant to stay out of the renewed war if possible, this policy was subject to confidence being maintained in the victory of the Allies. The important amendment of the Neutrality Law had been inspired with the intention of aiding them with American industrial resources in the belief that this would suffice to ensure the defeat of Germany.

The situation was to become gradually more complicated, however, in the light of later signs of a real alliance between Germany and Russia, and the necessity for the British contraband control and naval command to disregard American "rights." The American claim of a belt of 300 miles of territorial waters along the Atlantic coasts of the North and South continents clashed with unavoidable actions by the British Navy in hunting German merchantmen and warships, especially in the case of the pocket battleship *Graf Spee*, which had been raiding Allied and neutral shipping when it was forced to battle with British cruisers and took refuge in the harbour of Montevideo, Uruguay. These developments occurred during the next three months of the war, but no efforts of German propaganda succeeded in modifying the strong anti-Nazi feeling that crystallized during the opening phase, which included the destruction of Poland.

The desperate and disorganized resistance of the brave Polish people was at the final stage, with the heroic resistance of Warsaw, when the first-fruits of the cynical Nazi-Soviet Pact were revealed to the world in the invasion of Poland from the east by Russian forces, which advanced until they met the German vanguards.

This occasioned a fresh outburst of indignation against the Soviet Government, but the more discerning critics pointed out that the Russian invasion was mainly a reoccupation of largely Russian territory, and that in the south especially, where the frontier joined Ruthenia and Roumania, the Russian advance was a serious setback to German strategy, in that it cut the Germans off from the Balkans. The official Soviet statement, made by M. Molotov, Premier and Commissar for Foreign Affairs, was

made in a Note handed to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow. It reinforced the German pretext for invading Poland by saying that

“ the Polish-German War has shown the internal bankruptcy of the Polish State. During the course of ten days’ hostilities, Poland has lost all her industrial areas and cultural centres. Warsaw, as the capital of Poland, no longer exists. The Polish Government has disintegrated and no longer shows any sign of life. This means that the Polish State and its Government have, in point of fact, ceased to exist. In the same way, the agreements concluded between the U.S.S.R. and Poland have ceased to operate. Left to her own devices and bereft of leadership, Poland has become a suitable field for all manner of hazards and surprises, which may constitute a threat to the U.S.S.R. For these reasons the Soviet Government, which has hitherto been neutral, cannot any longer preserve a neutral attitude towards these facts. The Soviet Government also cannot view with indifference the fact that the kindred Ukrainian and White Russian people who live on Polish territory, and who are at the mercy of fate, should be left defenceless. . . .”

The next day M. Molotov virtually repeated his statement in a broadcast speech for home consumption, and in retrospect one feels that the Soviet case was by no means on the level of the entirely false Nazi pretensions.

The Soviet Government had disregarded world opinion by stepping in at a moment when it could occupy certain territory without seriously warring against the Polish people, and in doing so they were obviously taking defensive measures against Germany. Their haste was probably to forestall further German advances eastward, and similarly the subsequent non-aggression pacts which they forced upon the small Baltic States, Latvia, Esthonia, and Lithuania, providing for strategic privileges in their territories, were a further strengthening of their position against foreign—mainly German—aggression, for it had always been a prime consideration of German prestige and strategy to command the Baltic. The Nazi Government, however, were in no position to oppose such measures, being relieved enough to have bought Russian “ neutrality,” and their propaganda for a time asserted that all the Soviet’s actions had been in agreement with Germany.

In the House of Commons, on September 20th, Mr. Chamberlain reviewing recent events of the war, described the Russian invasion, which had begun on the 17th, and said : “ It is still too early to pronounce any

final verdict on the motive or consequences of the Russian action." The Polish Government, which had removed to Kutý, issued a communiqué on September 18th, stating :

" The Polish Ambassador in Moscow declined to accept the Soviet Note sent to him yesterday. The Polish Government approved the action of its Ambassador, who asked for his passports. The Polish Government protests strongly against the unilateral action of Russia in breaking her Non-Aggression Pact with Poland, and also against the invasion of Polish territory, which was undertaken when the whole Polish nation was struggling with all its might against the German aggressor. The Polish Government parries the reasons given in the Soviet Note with the statement that the Polish Government is carrying out its duties normally and the Polish Army is struggling with success against the enemy."

The fact, unfortunately, was that the Polish armies appeared to have been badly led, Polish defences neglected, and internal political divisions for many years ruthlessly suppressed, and in the speech above referred to Mr. Chamberlain merely echoed popular feeling, but misrepresented the truth by asserting that the Soviet invasion had " had a decisive effect upon the war on the Eastern Front." The Polish defeat, in spite of magnificent human material, had been overwhelming and more rapid than the most optimistic estimates of the Nazi chiefs. Heroic stands made here and there, culminating in the resistance of the civilian population of Warsaw, led by an indomitable and capable Mayor, engaged the profound sympathy of every freedom-loving people, but could not hide the fact that there was something radically wrong in the government of the nation and the organization of its defences.

The British Government's apologia for declaring itself at war with Germany, known as the White Paper, was published on September 21st, and turned attention again on the unscrupulous Nazi methods, but it was largely accepted as read in America, for as the New York *Herald Tribune* said, " this new ' White Paper,' embracing 195 printed pages of documents, contains little that the American reading public has not already had occasion to know about." The United States was concentrated on the Administration's campaign to get the Arms Embargo repealed, and on September 21st President Roosevelt opened a joint session of Congress, and appealed for an amendment of the law as follows :

" I have asked the Congress to reassemble in extraordinary session in order that it may consider and act on the amendment of

certain legislation which in my fast judgment so alters the historic foreign policy of the United States that it impairs the peaceful relationship of the United States with foreign nations. At the outset I proceed on the assumption that every member of the Senate and of the House of Representatives and every member of the executive branch of the Government, including the President and his associates, personally and officially, are equally and without reservation in favour of such measures as will protect the neutrality, the safety, and the integrity of our country, and at the same time keep us out of war. The executive branch of the Government did its utmost, within our traditional policy of non-involvement, to aid in averting the present appalling war. Having thus striven, and failed, this Government must lose no time or effort to keep our nation from being drawn in. In my candid judgment we shall succeed in these efforts.

"We are proud of the historical efforts of the United States and of all the Americas during all these years, because we have thrown every ounce of our influence for peace into the scale of peace. There has been sufficient realism in the United States to see how close to our own shores came the dangerous paths which were being followed on other continents. Last January I told the Congress that a war which threatened to envelop the world in flames had been averted, but it had become increasingly clear that peace is not assured. As late as the end of July I spoke to members of the Congress about the definite possibility of war—I should have called it the probability of war. And last January also, I spoke to this Congress of the need for further warning of new threats of conquest, military and economic, a challenge to religion, to democracy, and to international good faith. I said an ordering of society which relegates religion, democracy, and good faith among nations to the background can find no place within it for the ideals of the Prince of Peace. The United States rejects such an ordering and retains its ancient faith. And I said we know what might happen to us of the United States if the philosophers of force were to encompass the other continents and invade our own. We no more than other nations can afford to be surrounded by the enemies of our faith and our humanity. Last January I also said, we have learned that when we deliberately try to legislate neutrality, our neutrality laws may operate unevenly and unfairly, may actually give aid to an aggressor and deny it to the victim. The instinct of self-preservation should warn us that we ought not to let that happen any more.

"The so-called Neutrality Act of 1935 was continued in force by the joint resolution of May 1st, 1937, despite grave doubts expressed as to its wisdom by many senators and representatives and by officials charged with the conduct of our foreign relations,



MARSHAL FOCH, M CLEMENCEAU, MR LLOYD GEORGE
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including myself. I regret that the Congress passed that Act. I regret equally that I signed that Act. On July 14th of this year I asked the Congress in the cause of peace and in the interests of real American neutrality and security to take action to change that Act. I now ask again that such action be taken in respect of that part of the Act which is wholly inconsistent with ancient precepts of the laws of nations—the embargo provisions. I ask it because they are, in my opinion, most vitally dangerous to American neutrality, American security, and, above all, American peace. These embargo provisions as they exist today prevent the sale to a belligerent by an American factory of any completed implements of war. But they allow the sale of many types of uncompleted implements of war, as well as all kinds of general materials and supplies. They furthermore allow such products of industry and agriculture to be taken in American-flagged ships to belligerent nations. There, in itself, under the present law, lies definite danger to our neutrality and our peace. From a purely material point of view, what is the advantage to us of sending all manner of articles across the ocean for final processing there, when we could give employment to thousands by doing it here?

“I seek a great consistency—a greater consistency through the repeal of the embargo provisions and a return to international law. I seek re-enactment of the historical and traditional American policy. It has been erroneously said that a return to that policy might bring us nearer war. I give to you my deep and unalterable conviction, based on years of experience as a worker in the field of international peace, that by the repeal of the embargo the United States will more probably remain at peace than if the law remains as it stands today. I say this because, with the repeal of the embargo, this Government clearly and definitely will insist that American citizens and American ships keep away from the immediate perils of the actual zones of conflict. These perilous days demand co-operation of Congress without a trace of partisanship. Our acts must be guided by one single hard-headed thought—keeping America out of this war.”

The Repeal was only to come after a prolonged political battle, but it was perceived as almost inevitable, and Herr Hitler and his advisers could have entertained no more illusions on the subject. Their verbal campaign, as we shall see, still directed appeals to American opinion as well as attempting to divide the Allies, but the German aggression and illegal acts of warfare could not be covered up by any amount of propaganda, and the Nazi Government soon found a serious threat to German morale in the intensified use of wireless. The outstanding sign of this

was the direct appeal of the British Prime Minister to German public opinion, in a broadcast speech in German on September 3rd :

" German people ! Your country and mine are now at war. Your Government has bombed and invaded the free and independent State of Poland, which this country is in honour bound to defend. You are told by your Government that you are fighting because Poland rejected your Leader's offer and resorted to force. What are the facts ? The so-called ' offer ' was made to the Polish Ambassador in Berlin on Thursday evening, two hours before the announcement by your Government that it had been ' rejected.' So far from having been rejected, there had been no time even to consider it. You may ask why Great Britain is concerned. We are concerned because we gave our word of honour to defend Poland against aggression. Why did we feel it necessary to pledge ourselves to defend this Eastern Power when our interests lie in the West, and when your Leader has said he has no interest to the West ? The answer is that—and I regret to have to say it—that nobody in this country any longer places any trust in your Leader's word. He gave his word that he would respect the Locarno Treaty ; he broke it. He gave his word that he neither wished nor intended to annex Austria ; he broke it. He declared that he would not incorporate the Czechs in the Reich ; he did so. He gave his word after Munich that he had no further territorial demands in Europe ; he broke it. He gave his word that he wanted no Polish provinces ; he broke it. He has sworn to you for years that he was the mortal enemy of Bolshevism ; he is now its ally. Can you wonder his word is, for us, not worth the paper it is written on ? The German-Soviet Pact was a cynical *volte-face*, designed to shatter the Peace Front against aggression. This gamble failed. The Peace Front stands firm. Your Leader is now sacrificing you, the German people, to the still more monstrous gamble of a war to extricate himself from the impossible position into which he has led himself and you. In this war we are not fighting against you, the German people, for whom we have no bitter feeling, but against a tyrannous and forsworn régime which has betrayed not only its own people but the whole of Western civilization and all that you and we hold dear. May God defend the right ! "

But the propaganda campaign by Britain designed to carry ideas into the long-imprisoned minds of Germans also took a form that the Nazi Government had not expected. This was the dropping of millions of leaflets written in German over Western Germany by R.A.F. reconnaissance planes at night. A series of raids took place during the first few weeks of war, meeting with remarkably little opposition from the German

Air Force or from A.A. gunfire. The first of the leaflets to be dropped read as follows :

“ WARNING !

“ *A Message from Britain*

“ German Men and Women. The Government of the Reich have, with cold deliberation, forced war upon Great Britain. They have done so knowing that it must involve mankind in a calamity worse than that of 1914. The assurances of peaceful intentions the Führer gave to you and to the world in April have proved as worthless as his words at the Sportpalast last September, when he said : ‘ We have no more territorial claims to make in Europe.’

“ Never has Government ordered subjects to their death with so little excuse. This war is utterly unnecessary. Germany was in no way threatened or deprived of justice. Was she not allowed to re-enter the Rhineland, to achieve the Anschluss, and to take back the Sudeten Germans in peace ? Neither we nor any other nation would have sought to limit her advance so long as she did not violate independent non-German peoples. Every German ambition—just to others—might have been satisfied by means of amicable negotiation. President Roosevelt offered you both peace with honour and the prospect of prosperity. Instead, your rulers have condemned you to the massacre, miseries, and privations of a war they cannot hope to win.

“ It is not us, but you, they have deceived. For years their iron censorship has kept from you truths that even uncivilized peoples know. It has imprisoned your minds in, as it were, a concentration camp. Otherwise they would not have dared to misrepresent the combination of peaceful peoples to secure peace as hostile encirclement. We have no enmity against you, the German people. This censorship has also concealed from you that you have not the means to sustain protracted warfare. Despite crushing taxation, you are on the verge of bankruptcy. Our resources and those of our Allies, in men, arms, and supplies, are immense. We are too strong to break by blows, and we could wear you down inexorably.

“ You, the German people, can, if you will, insist on peace at any time. We also desire peace, and are prepared to conclude it with any peace-loving Government in Germany.”

When the translation of the leaflet was published through the new Ministry of Information, it was adversely criticized, and with some justice, for its pseudo-academic manner and length ; nevertheless it stated

things which any German in the near future must have been inclined to believe, excepting for the inevitable changes of mood and endless invention of new propaganda which were bound to obscure the primary lesson. After mocking at the leaflets, Marshal Goering and other Nazi leaders evidently became concerned, and a little later their Government issued a prohibition that none but the Gestapo police were to pick them up. Possibly the leaflet that reproduced scandalous information already published first by an American journalist, and then by the Press of the whole world outside Germany, alarmed the Nazi Government most. It read :

“THESE ARE YOUR LEADERS

“Germans ! You are going into this war with hunger rations. Your belts have already been tight enough for some years. Now read what the American newspapers say about your leaders, who are responsible for all your sufferings.

“The American Press first published on September 20th, 1939, with all details, a factual report revealing that Goering, Goebbels, Ribbentrop, Hess, Himmler, Ley, and Streicher have invested cash and bonds, swelling their life insurances abroad to the monstrous total of £7,124,700 on their own behalf. The well-known *Chicago Daily News* writes : ‘Whatever fate Nazi Germany’s will be as the result of this war, Hitler’s clique will not suffer need, and even if they fail to escape with their skins, at least their families will be well off.’

“New York’s *Journal-American* confirms that the Nazi fortunes are in the banks in South America, Japan, Luxembourg, Holland, Egypt, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, and Switzerland. They have also large cash accounts deposited with Nazi agents and German shipping companies.

“Goering, whom Hitler has nominated his successor, has a fortune of not less than £1,501,500 abroad.

“Goebbels possesses in Buenos Aires, Luxembourg, and Osaka, in Japan, the handsome sum of £1,798,000.

“Ribbentrop is the richest of them all, since a sum of £1,948,000 is invested for him in Holland and Switzerland.

“Hess, Hitler’s deputy, has secret hoards amounting to £801,500 at Sao Paulo and Basle.

“Ley (head of the German Labour Front) has derived handsome profits from the ‘Strength Through Joy’ movement, and possesses £378,200.

“Himmler (head of the Gestapo), who watches like a lynx that no German takes more than ten marks across the frontier, has himself smuggled abroad a sum of £527,500.

“Streicher (the anti-Semite propagandist), well known as the

defender of German honour, has savings abroad amounting to £150,000.

"Such are the men who are your leaders."

Nazi propaganda had made a bad impression from the first, in its accounts of the campaign in Poland, and then in trying to deny the torpedoing of the *Athenia* by conflicting explanations, which were refuted by the evidence of the rescued passengers and crew. It was at a disadvantage compared with the Allied propaganda, which for some time to come merely needed to acquire a reputation for truth by reporting the truth. And, apart from impressions abroad, the public at home was more susceptible in Germany to loss of morale, owing to foreign news, than in Britain and France. One device of the British and French radio news was to play over records of Herr Hitler's former speeches which his subsequent actions had so deeply falsified. The B.B.C. Foreign News Service in various languages was extended, and included even an Arab news bulletin, and this was preceded by an ancient Arab melody played on the flute, instead of the customary B.B.C. signal, the ringing of Bow Bells, which might have displeased Arab listeners who associated it with a Christian church. The Allied propaganda started with another advantage also—the widespread condemnation of the Nazi Government's actions preceding and during the first phase of the war. The neutral and comparatively impartial judgment of the world was against Germany. This increased the necessity for greater efforts of Nazi propaganda, as a counter-attack to the Allied bulletins, both abroad and at home. With his consummate skill for saying whatever served the immediate political purpose, Herr Hitler timed his next speech so that, while seeming to confute his enemies, he could also boast of a great military victory. The pathological fantasy of a Hitler speech intended to meet a big crisis, with cunning that sounded like spontaneous and excited sincerity, was perfectly illustrated by the Führer's oration broadcast from Danzig on September 19th, while ravaged Poland was at her last gasp :

"This moment is an experience of joy, not only for you, but for the whole German people. I am myself conscious of the greatness of this hour. I am treading for the first time on soil which has been settled by German people for half a millennium. The World War, that most senseless of all wars of all times, made a sacrifice of this city and of this land. The World War, which nobody won and everyone lost, has left in everybody the conviction that such a fate must never be repeated. Germany entered the

World War with no 'war' aims. She hoped that the ensuing peace would render possible the restoration of Germany and abolish all distress. The Peace of Versailles, instead of being one of free negotiation, was imposed on the German people. Now I shall say nothing of the injustice of Versailles. The worst thing in the life of the nation was not the injustice, but the stupidity with which a peace that struck at all political and national facts was dictated to the world. This land here was a victim of the madness of that time, and the Polish State, so called, was a project of this stupidity. What Germany had to sacrifice for this State of Poland is not known to the world. Only one thing I must say here. All this territory which was then incorporated in Poland is exclusively the product of German industry and German activity. A plebiscite in the province cut away from the German Reich and given to Poland—an action defended on the ground of national necessity—would have shown that nobody there had any desire to become part of the Polish State. Nevertheless, I have always made the attempt to find a tolerable solution which might lead to an acceptable arrangement. I have striven to shape definite frontiers in the west and in the south of Germany in order to safeguard the future of peace. I made the same attempt in the east. At that time there lived in Poland a man of energy and action. I tried, in common with Marshal Pilsudski, to find a solution that would secure peace. In this we put aside the Versailles Treaty and attempted to reach a temporary solution. After the death of Marshal Pilsudski, however, the mortal fight against all Germans in Poland began anew. This fight naturally embittered and ruined the relations between the two nations. It was possible for us only with difficulty to look on while the German minority was barbarously ill-treated. As for me, what made me most indignant was that we had to bear this ill-treatment and oppression from a nation standing far below us ; for, when all is said and done, Germany is really a great Power, even though the others attempted to exterminate us through the Treaty of Versailles. Especially intolerable were two circumstances. Here, first, a city, whose German character cannot be doubted, was not only prevented from joining the German Reich, but attempts were also made through the years to colonize it for Poland. Secondly, a German province was cut off from the Reich and allowed only one means of communication with it in a way that permitted all kinds of trickery.

"No other country in the world would have borne this state of affairs as long as Germany has. I do not know what Great Britain would have said to such a peaceful solution at her cost or what would have been done by France or America. I tried to find a solution. I submitted proposals orally to those in power in Poland at that time. They knew these proposals—they were

more than moderate. I tried to reconcile the economic demands of Poland with the German character of Danzig. At that time I was too modest, and there were moments in which I asked myself the question whether I could demand of my own people that such proposals should be made to the Polish Government. What I did, I did to save the German people and the Polish people from other sufferings. These demands were repeated by me in the spring. Danzig must return to the Reich ; a road must be built through the Corridor, naturally at our expense ; Poland should retain the same rights as before in the harbour of Danzig ; and finally the Polish minority should have political rights. I do not know in what state of mind the Polish Government could have been to reject such proposals. I do know, however, that countless Germans gave a sigh of relief when that happened, for they believed I had gone too far to meet the Poles.

" Poland's answer was first mobilization ; and then wild terror began. My request to the Polish Foreign Minister to visit me in Berlin was rejected. Instead, every month there were continually increasing threats, which are not bearable when they come from a small State, and in the long run are quite impossible, even from a great Power. Polish papers declared it was not a question of Danzig ; East Prussia must also be incorporated. Others wanted, besides East Prussia and Pomerania, to put Poland's frontiers on the Oder ; and finally they were worrying themselves whether to break our Army before Berlin, or beyond it. The Polish Marshal, who has now left his Army woefully in the lurch, declared that he would cut our Army to pieces. The martyrdom of our countrymen began."

Such a mixture of deliberate lying and balderdash could have served no useful purpose to the Nazi leaders except among their own people, whose bewilderment and alarm at the consequences of the treacherous and brutal treatment of Poland must have been dangerous to German unity at the outset of the war that Herr Hitler's policy had provoked. The Führer continued his lying harangue by declaring that he had asked himself " who could have blinded Poland thus ? " And of course the answer was the " universal warmongers " who had been doing the same thing, not merely for ten years, but for centuries. To hear the orator without knowing any facts of the situation, one would reasonably suppose that Germany had been peaceful to the point of weakness and with never a thought of aggression against her neighbours. But the pact of mutual defence made with Poland by the Allies was, in Herr Hitler's insane interpretation, a wicked encouragement to the Poles to brutalize the German

minority. He had been laughed at for uttering his warnings "against Churchill, Duff Cooper, and the rest." But for the British guarantee "and incitement of these apostles of war" it would have been possible to avoid war.

Then came the reiteration of Germany's biggest lie about the start of the war, that he was ready to negotiate directly with Poland, "but the Poles did not turn up. Instead there was the Polish general mobilization, new acts of terror, endless attacks on German soil." This fantasy reached the charming climax—"but patience in national affairs must not be mistaken for weakness." So after looking on and restraining himself for years while aggressive Poland provoked him, he "at last" decided to use the same language to Poland "that Poland intended to use with us." The suggestion of futurity about Poland's intentions quite shattered the argument that the monstrous German invasion had been the inevitable consequence of what Poland had done, and indeed to a calm world showed clearly that Herr Hitler's charge against Britain of trying to make use of Poland really meant that the German Government wished Poland out of the way as it had wished Czecho-Slovakia out of the way, because these independent States were obstacles in the path of German domination of Europe. The attempt of Britain and France—far too belated, owing to a weak-kneed foreign policy—to preserve the freedom of these neighbours of Germany, when at last it was expressed by the largely futile pact with Poland, was the danger that Herr Hitler really had in mind when he decided to lose no more time in smashing up Poland, even if it necessitated a reversal of avowed Nazi policy towards Russia, and the risk of the Soviet occupation of part of Poland proving a different kind of obstacle to a German push south-east to the Balkans. Unless they were very stupid—and it would be a great error to suppose that the Nazi madness arose from mere stupidity—the Nazi leaders also must have realized that the smashing of Poland and the addition of a Soviet menace to Balkan countries would eventually alienate Italy. This eventuality, not much considered by the man in the street in September 1939, had become plain to see before the end of the year.

Count Ciano, still the Minister for Foreign Affairs, possibly under pressure from his chief, began to pull strings in the Balkans that were bound to conflict equally with the Nazi as with the Soviet ambitions. Italian policy was directed to fostering a new understanding between Roumania and Hungary, Roumania being encouraged to take a firm line about her Bessarabian frontier against the Soviet and to negotiate with Hungary

about the Transylvanian territory. Hungary's disgruntlement at the excessive amount of this territory transferred to Roumania after the previous war was the chief obstacle to an understanding that would make for any common defensive policy, and the unsettled situation also disturbed Yugo-Slavia, with her lively and dissatisfied Croat minority. The previous antagonism between Yugo-Slavia and Italy, that had been intensified by the Italian annexation of Albania, could be largely eliminated in the face of the German menace from the north, and so Italian policy was also directed to the cultivation of a new understanding with the greatest of the Balkan and Central European States, because this was essential to any general Balkan agreement influenced by Italy to resist aggression from either Germany or the Soviet.

Having in mind this complicated background to Italy's policy of "non-belligerency," and her virtual abandonment of her too-powerful and unscrupulous Axis partner of pre-war days, we may the better get in perspective the motives behind Herr Hitler's farrago of lies and half-truths, and his seemingly irresponsible approval of the Russian invasion of Poland.

Before coming to this in his Danzig speech, however, he indulged in some beating of the war-drum to appeal to the martial feelings of his German citizens who had tightened their belts so many times already in the "glorious" cause of a mighty Germany. Poland had chosen war, he asserted, and she had got it. The Poles had been told that it would be easy to hold up the German armies, and even to make them retreat. And Poland had learnt in eighteen days "that they had been lied to." He found it appropriate here to quote from Scripture—"the Lord has struck with man, horse, and wagon." Their troops were now in Brest-Litovsk, in Lemberg, and farther south. Endless columns of captured Poles were being marched away from the Kutno area. "Yesterday morning there were 20,000 prisoners, last night 50,000, and early today, 70,000. I do not know how many there are now." The remains of the Polish Army would be done with in a few days, and thus had the German Army given the western Democracies their object-lesson. So he thanked the fighting Services for their glorious deeds, and so on. He had, of course, ordered the Air Force "most strictly" to limit themselves only to military objectives, but their other opponents had better not take advantage of this! In future they would take an eye for an eye, and for every bomb answer with five bombs.

It is not surprising in retrospect if such a hash of truth and so vile a

distortion of sentiments to hide a reversion to savage barbarism for the sake of power should have served its main purpose of winning over many Germans, both soldiers and civilians. Before the catastrophic outbreak of the second Great War, Europe was only just beginning to emerge from the ages-old herd instincts of glorifying successful aggression against another people, and the Germans had revealed themselves in modern times as more prone than the average to a tame subservience to the cause of the bellicose tribe. So one more bang on the drum of glory, prefaced by the statement that the British had so far behaved as though they wanted a humane war, but he knew only too well that their humanity was nothing more than awed fright in face of German achievements. He would give credit where credit was due—this honest man :

“ I will not conceal from you that many of the Polish troops fought bravely. It can be said that the lower command behaved with valour ; the middle command was not intelligent enough ; the high command was—Polish. As the result of this there are to-day 200,000 Polish prisoners in our hands, among them 2,000 officers, and numerous generals. . . .”

Then he goes on :

“ Fundamentally, I have so trained the German people that any Government that is praised by our enemies would be rejected by Germans. If a Government were praised by Churchill, Eden, or others like them, then such a Government would only be tolerated by these gentlemen themselves. It is for us only praise to be rejected by these gentlemen. I am proud to be attacked by them. But if they believe that they can divide the German people from me, then they consider the German people as characterless and as stupid as themselves.”

So far as Britain was concerned, much of this speech was at least honest in declaring Germany's enmity, in contrast to the protests previously made alternatively to France and Britain that Germany desired their friendship. Following up the Führer's assertions then, Herr Goering on September 9th had made a speech in Berlin which was broadcast, in which he repeated the gibe that Britain's motto was, “ We shall fight to the last Frenchman.” Evidently still hoping for political dissensions in France, the Nazi propaganda machine throughout September directed at the French their declarations that Germany had no quarrel with them, and in the mine-sown region of the German outposts signs appeared, such as, “ Hold your fire and we won't shoot,” and a few weeks later the German artillery carefully refrained from shelling any French tanks

or transport inside the French frontier. But if any of the French troops were inclined to take these demonstrations seriously, they must have been quickly enlightened about the German mentality by the cunning devices to blow them to bits with concealed mines. Even a soldier's grave, with newly laid wreaths on it, left behind in a retreat by the Germans, was found to be mined, an echo of the savage trickeries of German troops on the Western Front between 1914 and 1918.

The Danzig oration probably served its purpose in Germany, but in the neutral countries it was recognized as being intended mainly to stiffen a shaken morale. Its extraordinary combination of serious arguments that had already been answered and of low cunning made no perceptible impression outside Germany. An indication of the official American attitude was conveyed without formal statements by the apparently spontaneous (but probably deliberate) confessions made to newspapermen on the same day by President Roosevelt and Mr. Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State. When asked for his impressions, Mr. Roosevelt said that after commencing to listen he had to switch off the radio because of being interrupted by visitors. Mr. Hull said he had been "too busy" to listen at all.

One more onslaught upon pacifist and neutral sentiment abroad was made by Herr Hitler in the big autumn campaign of verbal warfare. This was a speech on October 6th, to a special meeting of the important Reichstag. The fantasy and the cunning were both intensified, making it perhaps the most remarkable of all the orations with which the War of 1939 was conducted, and this selection of the more pointed passages cannot adequately convey its nightmarish effect, when considered in the light of the facts of 1938—in European affairs:

" . . . One also realizes that it would be senseless to annihilate millions of men and to destroy property worth millions in order to reconstruct a State which at its very birth was termed an abortion by all those not of Polish extraction. What other reason exists? Has Germany made any demands of England which might threaten the British Empire or endanger its existence? On the contrary, Germany has made no such demands on either France or England. But if this war is really to be waged in order to give Germany a new régime, that is to say, in order to destroy the present Reich once more and thus to create a new Treaty of Versailles, then millions of human lives will be sacrificed in vain, for neither will the German Reich go to pieces, nor will a second Treaty of Versailles be made. And even should this come to pass after three, four, or even eight

years of war, then this second Versailles would once more become the source of fresh conflict in the future.

"In any event, a settlement of the world's problems carried out without consideration of the vital interests of its most powerful nations could not possibly, after the lapse of from five to ten years, end in any other way than that attempt made twenty years ago, which is now ended. No, this War in the West cannot settle any problems except perhaps the ruined finances of certain armament manufacturers, newspaper owners, or other international war profiteers. . . .

"Two problems are ripe for discussion to-day.

"First, the settlement of the problems arising from the disintegration of Poland, and, second, the problem of eliminating those international difficulties which endanger the political and economic existence of the nations. What, then, are the aims of the Reich Government as regards the adjustment of conditions within the territory to the west of the German-Soviet line of demarcation which has been recognized as Germany's sphere of influence?

"First, the creation of a Reich frontier which, as has already been emphasized, shall be in accordance with existing historical, ethnographical, and economic conditions.

"Second, the disposition of the entire living space according to the various nationalities; that is to say, the solution of the problems affecting the minorities which concern not only this area, but nearly all the States in the south-east of Europe.

"Third, in this connexion: An attempt to reach a solution and settlement of the Jewish problem.

"Fourth, reconstruction of transport facilities and economic life in the interest of all those living in this area.

"Fifth, a guarantee for the security of this entire territory, and sixth, formation of a Polish State so constituted and governed as to prevent its becoming once again either a hotbed of anti-German activity or a centre of intrigue against Germany and Russia.

"In addition to this, an attempt must immediately be made to wipe out or at least to mitigate the ill-effects of war; that is to say, the adoption of practical measures for alleviation of the terrible distress prevailing there.

"These problems can, I have already emphasized, perhaps be discussed, but never solved, at the conference table. If Europe is really sincere in her desire for peace, then the States in Europe ought to be grateful that Russia and Germany are prepared to transform this hotbed into a zone of peaceful development and that these two countries will assume the responsibility and bear the burdens inevitably involved. For the Reich this project, since it cannot be undertaken in an imperialistic spirit, is a task which will take fifty to a hundred years to perform.

" Justification for this activity on Germany's part lies in the political organizing of this territory as well as in its economic development. In the long run, of course, all Europe will benefit from it. Second, and in my opinion by far the most important task, is the creation of not only a belief in, but also a sense of, European security. For this it is necessary first that aims in the foreign policy of European States should be made perfectly clear. As far as Germany is concerned, the Reich Government is ready to give a thorough and exhaustive exposition of the aims of its foreign policy. In doing so, they begin by stating that the Treaty of Versailles is now regarded by them as obsolete ; in other words, that the Government of the German Reich, and with them the whole German people, no longer see cause or reason for any further revision of the treaty, apart from the demand for adequate colonial possessions justly due to the Reich, namely, in the first instance, for the return of German colonies.

" This demand for colonies is based not only on Germany's historical claim to German colonies, but above all on her elementary right to a share of the world's resources of raw materials. This demand does not take the form of an ultimatum, nor is it a demand backed by force, but a demand based on political justice and sane economic principles.

" Second, the demand for a real revival of international economic life, coupled with an extension of trade and commerce, presupposes a reorganization of the international economic system ; in other words, of production in the individual States. In order to facilitate the exchange of goods thus produced, however, markets must be organized and a final regulation arrived at so that the obstacles in the way of unrestricted trade can be gradually removed.

" Third, the most important condition, however, for a real revival of economic life in and outside of Europe is the establishment of an unconditionally guaranteed peace and a sense of security on the part of the individual nations.

" This security will not only be rendered possible by the final sanctioning of the European status, but above all by the reduction of armaments to a reasonable and economically tolerable level. An essential part of this necessary sense of security, however, is a clear definition of the legitimate use of, and application of, certain modern armaments which can, at any given moment, have such a devastating effect on the pulsating life of every nation and hence create a permanent sense of insecurity. In my previous speeches in the Reichstag I made proposals with this end in view. At the time they were rejected—maybe for the simple reason that they were made by me. I believe, however, that a sense of national security will not return to Europe until clear and binding agree-

ments have provided a comprehensive definition of the legitimate and illegitimate use of armaments.

"A Geneva convention once succeeded in prohibiting, in civilized countries at least, the killing of wounded, ill-treatment of prisoners, war against non-combatants, etc., and just as it was possible gradually to achieve a universal observance of this statute, a way must surely be found to regulate aerial warfare, use of poison gas and submarines, etc., and also so to define contraband that war will lose its terrible character of conflict waged against women and children and against non-combatants in general. A growing horror of certain methods of warfare will of its own accord lead to their abolition, and thus they will become obsolete.

"In the war with Poland I endeavoured to restrict aerial warfare to objectives of so-called military importance, or only to employ it to combat active resistance at a given point. But it must surely be possible to emulate the Red Cross and to draw up some universally valid international regulations. It is only when this is achieved that peace can reign, particularly in our densely populated continent—a peace which, uncontaminated by suspicion and fear, will provide the only possible condition for real economic prosperity. . . ."

Herr Hitler then outlined his idea of the prerequisite of a secure peace. This must be a conference of all the leading nations of Europe to draw up a comprehensive statute. Such a conference, however, could not possibly deliberate while the cannon thundered or mobilized armies were bringing pressure to bear upon it. Since Europe's problems would have to be solved sooner or later, why not start now, before wholesale destruction set in? The battle of destruction would not be confined to the land, but would reach far out over the sea, for "today there are no longer any islands." Meanwhile the wealth of Europe would be scattered and its vigour sapped if the pause for deliberation that he was asking for did not occur. There would be a frontier between Germany and France again, but instead of flourishing towns it would consist of ruins and endless graveyards.

After this skilfully impudent demand for what amounted to an immediate armistice now that he had achieved his aims in Poland, Herr Hitler went on:

"Mr. Churchill and his companions may interpret these opinions of mine as weakness or cowardice if they like. I need not occupy myself with what they think; I make these statements simply because it goes without saying that I wish to spare my own

people this suffering. If, however, the opinions of Messrs. Churchill and followers should prevail, this statement will have been my last. Then we shall fight. Neither force of arms or lapse of time will conquer Germany. There never will be another November 1918 in German history. It is infantile to hope for the disintegration of our people.

"Mr. Churchill may be convinced that Great Britain will win. I do not doubt for a single moment that Germany will be victorious. Destiny will decide who is right.

"One thing only is certain. In the course of world history, there have never been two victors, but very often only losers. This seems to me to have been the case in the last war. May those peoples and their leaders who are of the same mind now make their reply. And let those who consider war to be the better solution reject my outstretched hand.

"As Führer of the German people and Chancellor of the Reich, I can thank God at this moment that He has so wonderfully blessed us in our hard struggle for what is our right, and beg Him that we and all other nations may find the right way, so that not only the German people, but all Europe, may once more be granted the blessing of peace."

A few days later the speech was answered by the Premiers of Britain and France, and meanwhile it was discussed in the United States. The bulk of opinion there, as reflected by public speeches and the Press, was still overwhelmingly antagonistic, and even leading Isolationist politicians who were busy opposing the President's proposals for the repeal of the Arms Embargo admitted in public statements that Herr Hitler's word was valueless. Nevertheless, the speech had more effect than the Danzig speech because of its clever simulation of constructive proposals of the kind that the Allies had desired to meet Germany in conference over, *before* the invasion of Poland.

The suggestion of a conference now that Germany had plainly lost the Nazi Government's gamble against opposition was recognized as a mere trick of propaganda to facilitate the attack upon Allied morale. But the speech succeeded in drawing expressions of opinions in favour of renewed negotiation, while in Britain some voices were raised once more, led by Mr. Lloyd George, in favour of a detailed statement of the Allied war aims. So far as the Führer's hint of offering peace was concerned, however, the United States Administration quickly followed Italy in declining to act as intermediary. The American response was a reminder that the Government still recognized both the Polish Ambassador and the Czecho-

Slovak Minister in Washington. M. Daladier's reply for France, a broadcast to the nation on October 10th, better than any comment, exposed the political opposition of the antagonists by its mere contiguity with Herr Hitler's pretence of reasonableness.

"We are at war and you will understand that silence is necessary for success in our military operations. You have rightly thought, and I am thoroughly in agreement with you, that it is only natural and legitimate that you be informed in general of the action of the Government and the thoughts and decisions which animate it in the principal events of international politics. It is of that that I wish especially to speak to you today.

"For a month our soldiers have advanced on enemy territory. In the air our aviators have multiplied the proofs of their courage. On the sea our sailors have assured free communications of France with her Empire, pursued enemy submarines, captured hundreds of thousands of tons of raw materials destined for Germany. Britain and France are mistress of the ocean, and you know from the experience of history that those who finally hold the seas sooner or later succeed in carrying off victory. But Britain does not confine herself to giving us the support of her Fleet. She does not confine herself to sending more aviators daily to our front, who give repeated proofs of their ability and valour. She also is sending rapidly to France her splendid youth, her robust material.

"I was told the other day that in some French regions at the moment when the German radio was carrying on its vain campaign to separate France from Britain, it was repeated that Great Britain wanted to wage war with the blood of the French. The voice of the traitor of Stuttgart was covered by the uninterrupted rumblings of convoys which were taking soldiers and cannon of the British Army toward our frontiers.

"Thus factual propaganda is stronger than that of lies. It is thus, moreover, in our national life, as you yourselves have certainly noticed. There, also, events have wrecked many other undertakings of enemy propaganda. Several weeks ago Communist leaders posed before you as fierce patriots. They were, according to themselves, new Jacobins. They had no words harsh enough, even insulting enough, to scorn the Government. They announced in meetings that they were ready to fight against Hitler and against his armies for liberty and the Fatherland. Yet it sufficed for the Bolsheviks to find it to their interest to agree with the Nazis and partition Poland with them, for these same great patriots to simply make their excuses for a peace of treason. There are dictators who massacre Communist workers and reach agreement later with their chiefs, but we French never think of confusing

the workers of France, whatever may be their political opinion, with men who wanted to abuse and betray them. On the contrary, it is with even more ardent faith in the people and the common Fatherland that we appeal to French fraternity which will permit us once more to overcome trials and vanquish peril. For we are fighting, not only for our soil and homes, but also for civilization which surpasses our frontiers and which made us what we are: free, worthy beings respectful of their neighbours, capable of keeping their word, and faithful to the great tradition of Western culture.

"Neither France nor Britain entered the war to support a sort of ideological crusade. Neither France nor Britain entered the war any more with a spirit of conquest than that they were obliged to fight because Germany wanted to impose on them her domination over Europe. Who could be made to believe now that it was a question of Danzig and the Corridor or the fate of German minorities? Germany has taken upon herself to show that she wanted either to subject Poland by deceit or crush her by steel and fire.

"After Austria came Czecho-Slovakia, and after Czecho-Slovakia, Poland. All these undertakings were only steps on the path which would have brought France and Europe to the harshest of slaveries.

"I know that they talk to you today of peace, of German peace, of peace which would only consecrate conquests by deceit or violence and would not prevent preparations for new ones. What, in fact, does the latest speech before the Reichstag amount to? This: I [Hitler] destroyed Poland, I am satisfied; let's stop the combat; let's hold a conference to consecrate my conquests and organize peace.

"The misfortune is that we already had heard such talk. After the annexation of Austria, Germany told the world: I have taken Austria; I ask nothing more.' Several months later he claimed the Sudetens, and Germany's chief told us at Munich that once this claim was satisfied he would ask for nothing more. Several months afterwards Germany seized all of Czecho-Slovakia. Then before the Reichstag the world was told: Germany asks nothing more.

"After crushing Poland it is the same assurance that is given today.

"Certainly we always wanted and still want only sincere co-operation and loyal understanding to be established among people, but we are determined not to submit to the dictates of violence. We have taken up arms against aggression. We will lay them down only when we have certain guarantees of security which may not be put in doubt every six months. How can this guarantee

exist either for us or for the world if a nation is wiped off the map of Europe by force? What people would ever feel protected from aggression if it appeared thus every six months, despite pledges against the annexation or partition of another people which had the right, like itself, to live independent and free? And how can it fail to be understood that, far from making reduction of armament possible, the subjecting of one nation can only force all other peoples continually to live and work only to arm?

"If peace is really desired, a lasting peace which will give to all women, to all children, the joy of living and confidence in the future, it will be necessary first to calm the revolted consciences, correct abuses of force, and conciliate honestly the rights and interests of all peoples.

"They say that the fate of Poland concerns only two Powers. We reply that it interests also, and first of all, the Poles. They [the Nazis] want to make the map of Europe without taking any account of living realities of peoples, either their traditions or their needs. We reply that Europe is brought thus to revolutions and wars which plunged it into blood for centuries. If peace is really desired, a lasting peace, it will be necessary to understand that security of nations can rest only on reciprocal guarantees excluding any surprise and erecting a barrier against any attempt at domination. If peace is really desired, a lasting peace, it will be necessary to understand finally that the time has passed when territorial conquests bring well-being to the conquerors. After all these conquests Germany is beginning the war with bread card, meat card, milk card, sugar card. We French have a horror of all this servitude. We want our victory to create only a Europe freed from all threats of aggression. France, on whom war has been imposed, speaks in battle the same language she has always spoken. I affirm, then, that we are fighting, and will continue to fight, to obtain a definite guarantee of security. . . ."

Less forceful and clear, but equally firm, Mr. Chamberlain's reply in the House of Commons, on October 12th, again reviewed the interchanges between the British and German and Polish Governments immediately before the war started, and reminded his hearers of Herr Hitler's broken pledges. It was fairly evident that the two Premiers' speeches had been prepared by mutual agreement, and Mr. Chamberlain followed the arguments of M. Daladier closely.

Less concerned with propagandist logic-chopping than with a forceful statement of the average British point of view about the war as a conflict which had to be won, Mr. Winston Churchill had made a broadcast speech on October 1st. It was a review, such as various Cabinet Ministers had

begun periodically to broadcast, of the progress of the war. A few days earlier in the House of Commons he had made an effective report on the successful defence of Britain by the Navy, and given figures to demonstrate the failure of the German counter-blockade, and his speech then had made a more vivid impression on the nation and abroad than any British speech so far delivered. It was seen that Mr. Churchill had both a command of English and a downright intelligence which made him our ideal spokesman during war, and when he came to give his review of the first month of hostilities, he justified the earlier impressions and obtained the maximum publicity in the United States Press. This was another kind of reply to Herr Hitler, the kind of reply that the Nazi Government might appreciate as a response to their aggressive career. Perhaps more important than any other function, the speech was of the kind to carry the confidence of the French. The two main passages were as follows :

“ The British Empire and the French Republic have been at war with Nazi Germany for a month tonight. We have not yet come at all to the severity of fighting which is to be expected ; but three important things have happened. First, Poland has been again overrun by two of the great Powers which held her in bondage for 150 years, but were unable to quench the spirit of the Polish nation. The heroic defence of Warsaw shows that the soul of Poland is indestructible, and that she will rise again like a rock, which may for a spell be submerged by a tidal wave, but which remains a rock. What is the second event of this first month ? It is, of course, the assertion of the power of Russia. Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland, instead of as invaders. But that the Russian Army should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace.

“ At any rate, the line is there and an Eastern Front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail. When Herr von Ribbentrop was summoned to Moscow last week, it was to learn the fact, and to accept the fact, that the Nazi designs upon the Baltic States and upon the Ukraine must come to a dead stop. I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in mystery inside an enigma ; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest. It cannot be in accordance with the interest or safety of Russia that Nazi Germany should plant itself upon the shores of the Black Sea, or that it should overrun the Balkan States and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of South-Eastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life-

interests of Russia. But here these interests of Russia fall into the same channel as the interests of Britain and France. None of these three Powers can afford to see Roumania, Yugo-Slavia, Bulgaria, and, above all, Turkey, put under the German heel. Through the fog of confusion and uncertainty we may discern quite plainly the community of interests which exists between England, France, and Russia, to prevent the Nazis carrying the flames of war into the Balkans and Turkey. Thus (at some risk of being proved wrong by events) I will proclaim tonight my conviction that the second great part of the first month of the war is that Hitler and all that Hitler stands for have been and are being warned off the east and the south-east of Europe."

Describing in some detail as "the third event of the war" the naval campaign against U-boats, and promising that "by the end of October we shall have three times as many hunting craft at work as we had at the beginning of the war," Mr. Churchill returned to the general survey :

"Therefore, to sum up the results of the first month, let us say that Poland has been overrun, but will rise again ; that Russia has warned Hitler off his Eastern dreams ; and that the U-boats may be safely left to the care and constant attention of the British Navy. Now I wish to speak about what is happening in our own island. When a peaceful democracy is suddenly made to fight for its life, there must be a lot of trouble and hardship in turning over from peace to war. I feel very keenly the reproaches of those who wish to throw themselves into the fight, but for whom we cannot find full scope at the present time. All this will clear as we get into our stride.

"His Majesty's Government is unitedly resolved to make the maximum effort of which the British nation is capable, and to persevere, whatever may happen, until decisive victory is gained. Meanwhile patriotic men and women, and those who understand the high causes in human fortunes which are at stake, must not only rise above fear, they must also rise above inconvenience and boredom. Parliament will be kept in session, and all grievances or muddles or scandals can be freely ventilated there. In past time the House of Commons has proved itself an instrument of national will-power capable of waging stern wars. Parliament is the shield and expression of democracy, and Ministers of the Crown base themselves upon the Parliamentary system. A large army has already gone to France. British armies upon the scale of the effort of the Great War are in preparation. The British people are determined to stand in the line with the splendid Army of the French Republic and share with them, as fast and as early as we can, whatever may be coming towards us both.

"It may be that great ordeals are coming to us in this island from the air. We shall do our best to give a good account of ourselves, and we must always remember that the command of the seas will enable us to bring the immense resources of Canada and the New World into play as a decisive ultimate air factor beyond the reach of what we have to give and take over here. Directions have been given by the Government to prepare for a war of at least three years. That does not mean that victory may not be gained in a shorter time. How soon it will be gained depends upon how long Herr Hitler and his group of wicked men, whose hands are stained with blood and soiled with corruption, can keep their grip upon the docile, unhappy German people. It was for Hitler to say when the war would begin, but it is not for him or his successors to say when it will end. It began when he wanted it, and it will end only when we are convinced that he has had enough. The Prime Minister has stated our war aims in terms which cannot be bettered, and which cannot be too often repeated: 'To redeem Europe from the perpetual and recurring fear of German aggression, and enable the peoples of Europe to preserve their independence and their liberties.' That is what the British and French nations are fighting for. How often have we been told we are the effete democracies whose day is done, and who must now be replaced by various forms of virile dictatorship and totalitarian despotism! No doubt at the beginning we shall have to suffer because of having too long wished to lead a peaceful life. Our reluctance to fight was mocked at as cowardice. Our desire to see an unarmed world was proclaimed as the proof of our decay.

"Now we have begun; now we are going on; now, with the help of God, and with the conviction that we are the defenders of civilization and freedom, we are going on, and we are going to go on to the end. I do not underrate what lies before us; but I must say this: I cannot doubt we have the strength to carry a good cause forward, and to break down the barriers which stand between the wage-earning masses of every land and a free and more abundant daily life."

Many other speeches of intrinsic interest and importance, and with some degree of propaganda value, were made during the autumn, to which the most persistent retort of the German radio were their brief news bulletin in English and French. So far as the English bulletins were concerned, they were listened to by many people in Britain as a form of entertainment until they began to pall, but they must have been almost completely ineffective in influencing opinion in favour of Germany. It was seen already that only Herr Hitler's peculiar genius for the most

unscrupulous deceit prevented German propaganda from being as stupid and ignorant of psychological shades as it had proved itself to be in the previous war, which could be seen in retrospect as to some extent a victory for the more effective British propaganda.

An interesting interlude occurred in November, when the Dutch and Belgian Sovereigns, Queen Wilhelmina and King Leopold, at last made an offer to act as intermediaries for peace negotiations. It appeared as if the step was taken to gain time while the Governments of these threatened neutral countries strengthened their defensive measures against a German invasion, and discussed the possibilities of concerted action. They were thoroughly alarmed by the concentrations of German forces near their frontiers, and by several hectoring warnings as to what Germany would regard as infringement of their neutrality in favour of Germany's enemies. The British reply came from King George, giving nothing away, but expressing appreciation of the desire for peace shown by Queen Wilhelmina and King Leopold's offer to mediate. The reply contrived to publish once more the gist of the Allied cause, which would have found sympathetic echoes in both these small States neighbouring Germany, and added :

"Should your Majesties be able to communicate to me any proposals from Germany of such a character as to afford real prospect of achieving the purpose I have described above, I can say at once that my Governments would give them their most earnest consideration."

And except for the sudden renewal of German threats of unrestricted warfare, and further massing of forces against the Western Front which were not followed up, those exchanges of views were the last that was heard of peace proposals. It looked as if Herr Hitler had lost the initiative in the war of words as definitely as the German Army, Air Force, and Navy had lost it in the war of material force. Even the Soviet Government's bullying tactics on the Hitler model against Finland, who objected to granting their demands for strategic privileges on Finnish territory, redounded as much to the discredit of Germany, who had sold the Baltic States, as to Soviet Russia, and when Germany was compelled to express through Herr Hitler acquiescence in the Soviet invasion and air bombardment of her small neighbour in disregard of an existing pact of friendship, Germany shared in the world's condemnation of the Soviet Government. Moreover, the obviously poor morale of the

Soviet troops, and the incompetence of the military machine, were not a good advertisement, even inside Germany, of the strength of the Nazis' much-vaunted ally. No doubt the Russian reverses were largely due to political considerations over-riding military strategy. The offensive had been started without adequate preparation and just when the worst winter conditions were setting in. All the disadvantages of inadequate transport contributed to the sufferings and demoralization of the wretched Soviet infantrymen. The campaign against Finland also strengthened the case of Allied propaganda by invoking outspoken sympathy of both the Government and the people of the United States, which promised the Finns deliveries of war material as well as a loan of £25 million. The Finnish Government's protests against the bombing of open towns, and of plainly marked hospitals, underlined the character of the Soviet aggression as being modelled upon that of the Nazi forces in Poland.

Among the official publications during the autumn was the British White Paper presented to Parliament by Lord Halifax, concerning the Treatment of German Nationals in Germany, 1938-39. This belated official exposure of Nazi brutality inside Germany not merely quoted authentic first-hand accounts of the atrocious persecution of Jews; it dealt with the trial and imprisonment of Dr. Niemöller and the deliberately anti-Christian policy of the Nazi Government. Examples of "the violence and brutality of the Nazis" also included ill-treatment of foreigners, among others, of Czecho-Slovak citizens, of a foreign Consul-General, and of a member of the staff of the British Embassy. While "flogging and torture were the order of the day" in the early years of the Nazi régime, the Germans declared that any excesses that may have occurred against foreigners were regretted by them, but were unavoidable in the first ardour of revolutionary fervour, but, the White Paper declared,

"this plea cannot be put forward to excuse events which occurred five years after the advent to power of the National Socialist party. It is evident from the published documents, which cover only the period from 1938 onwards, that neither the consolidation of the régime nor the passage of time have in any way mitigated its savagery."

The documents were not published sooner because it was desired to avoid embittering relations with Germany, but they were now published because of "the unscrupulous propaganda" that the German Government was publishing against Britain. Certainly, even if they came too

late to do more than underline what was generally believed of Nazi Germany, these testimonies to the savagery of the antagonist of the democracies made a deep impression, and justified the statement in the Introduction that the conditions for which the Nazi régime was responsible were reminiscent of the darkest ages of man. The pamphlet, moreover, opened with a reference to the German propaganda department's activities in South Africa, which the German Government had seriously hoped would remain neutral. The German Government had continuously, day by day, put out stories of British atrocities in South Africa forty years earlier. A Press message from Durban, dated September 27th, 1939, was quoted as follows :

" The Nazis now employ a woman announcer, who tells grim stories of alleged atrocities committed by the British in the Boer War. Africaaners are urged to revolt and are pathetically asked whether they intend to submit to the rule of those who put powdered glass in the food of their children in concentration camps during the Boer War. Many other outrageous falsehoods are told in an effort to stir up passions. Fantastic stories are also circulated of brutal treatment of Germans by the Allies in the present war."

After the event, when we know how the enemy propaganda failed, it is easy to underrate the danger that the widespread distribution of lying statements constituted when voluntary unity of purpose among the democratic peoples was an essential of effective resistance to the vast machine of German power. In South Africa especially, the danger of division was serious, and General Smuts's political victory over the intractable anti-British Hertzog was narrow, although his following in the country rapidly increased as the Dominions came together during the autumn to plan the most effective defence measures.

By November the attacks and counter-attacks in the verbal warfare had become spasmodic and local.

Actually feeling in the small neutral countries which could not defend themselves effectively against German aggression was hardening fast. While Switzerland, Belgium, and Holland had been scared by German troop concentrations and the probability that so soon as it suited their aims in a large-scale offensive the German High Command would not scruple to invade them, the Scandinavian countries had been suffering severely from the indiscriminate German naval offensive against both neutral and Allied merchant shipping. The wholesale laying of uncon-

trolled mines by the Germans in a vain attempt to blockade Great Britain was the last straw, the final economic burden to these countries already so badly hit by the dislocation of world trade. And while they had to bear this illegal interference with their rights at sea, they received periodical warnings and instructions from the German Government as to the strict observance of their neutrality, which the German Government evidently intended to be pro-German in effect if it could by any means exert enough pressure.

Then the Germans started a new form of frightfulness at sea. German seaplanes bombarded and sank British trawlers in the North Sea—which action soon was to be repeated whenever an opportunity occurred, and the crews as they sought their boats were machine-gunned without mercy. This sounded at the time as if it might be merely an exaggeration of Allied propaganda, but it proved to be true, and quite deliberate on the part of the German Command. It was no more than a supplement to the indiscriminate mining of the high seas with the so-called "magnetic mine," which during November revealed itself as the "secret weapon" boasted of by Herr Hitler in his Danzig speech. Besides other statements about the inhuman attack on British trawler crews, the King expressed his horror when talking to Sir John Marsden of the British Trawlers' Federation. He was on a visit to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the seemingly impromptu remarks of the King were no doubt deliberate, as was their publication in the Press. It did the German cause little good to issue a statement that their seaplanes had scored a victory at sea and had been in action against "armed vessels," and when shortly afterwards some Norwegian trawlers were similarly treated, the Scandinavian neutrals had more food for thought.

For at least the first two months of the war the vigorous misrepresentations of the German propaganda machine concerning the situation in the North Sea had made a noticeable impression in these countries, if some of the reports published in their Press constituted any criterion. The German propaganda took the form of a supply of articles on topical subjects as well as ostensible news. One suggestive example appeared in the *Berlingske Tidende*, a Danish paper, on October 15th. It lead off with the statement: "World's Largest Battleship Damaged," and after asserting that the British Fleet had already suffered a certain loss of 70,000 tons, including two aircraft carriers, and the damaging of one battleship and one heavy battle-cruiser, the writer stated that it was now known that H.M.S. *Hood* also was damaged. The brilliant co-operation of the

German Navy and Air Force was credited with the success of locating the British Fleet, and the article concluded :

“ German sources do not mention how many bombs were dropped during the raid on the Shetland Islands, but the figure supplied by the English is about 100. If that is true, people here are of the opinion that the percentage of hits must be surprisingly high if, as is claimed, six heavy and four light bombs found their objective. This accuracy has given rise to rumours that the German aircraft are equipped with a wonderful bomb-aiming instrument far superior to anything else known. It is manufactured by Zeiss of Jena.”

Although this newspaper was Danish, it circulated widely in Sweden and Norway, and it can be seen how useful, for a time, in frightening the neutrals such propaganda could be. Only the overwhelming weight of facts, especially the obvious continuity of British merchant shipping, and Germany's plain disregard of the neutrals' interests and rights, had made such material largely innocuous. By comparison, the British propaganda abroad, apart from the B.B.C. news bulletins in foreign languages, had made a poor showing, although it is only fair to observe that the Ministry of Information must have been at a disadvantage where speed was so important, by having to wait for ascertained facts before issuing official reports of events that the Germans treated with the freest admixture of invention.

As the German Government came more and more to disregard neutral opinion throughout the world, there was nothing henceforth to restrain them from conducting the war by the most ruthless methods that might give them any advantage. No neutral opinion helpful to them could any longer be influenced in their favour. The United States they had ceased to consider after the repeal of the Arms Embargo, and the amount of pacifist sentiment in neutral countries or among the populations of the Allied Powers had become negligible by the force of circumstances.

CHAPTER 6
RUSSIA'S PART IN THE WAR
BY ANTHONY ARMSTRONG

ON September 1st, 1939, Herr Hitler, either blind to, or heedless of, the consequences that must inevitably follow, unleashed his troops on Poland. Thus Great Britain, implementing her solemn pledge to the latter country, at 11.0 a.m. on September 3rd once again found herself at war with Germany almost exactly a quarter-century after the two nations had last joined battle.

At first history seemed almost to be repeating itself. As before, the onus of guilt was upon Germany's shoulders; as before, France stood by Britain's side; as before, unprovoked assault upon a small country's freedom had been the final signal for England's decision; and, as before, Italy, again Germanic Central Europe's ally, decided for neutrality.

But this time there was one big difference.

In 1914 Russia had been France's and Britain's eastern bulwark, a massive overhanging cliff, whose rôle was gradually to overwhelm Germany in an irresistible avalanche of man-power. In 1939 that same cliff stood as a refuge against which Germany could comfortably set her back and face her foes. For the War of 1939 opened with Russia as a neutral, not a combatant, a neutral, moreover, favourably linked to the Third Reich by a Non-Aggression Pact, which had been one of the big surprises of history. After four months of bargaining with Britain and France as to the exact conditions under which she would join against her natural enemy, Nazi Germany, Russia had turned round and practically allied herself to that same Germany in every sphere but that of armed assistance.

It was at once apparent to the democracies that this Russo-German rapprochement would have two immediate effects upon the forthcoming war. The first was definitely to seal the fate of Poland. Cut off from her Allies by land and sea, the Poles had to face at three points numerous highly trained German divisions and air squadrons in a lightning onslaught which was launched without warning almost before their leaders

had time to read the terms of the ultimatum they were supposed to have rejected. Russia alone had been in the position to render the necessary assistance against that onslaught, and Russia was now neutral. Even had her neutrality been benevolently exercised towards Poland, it could have done no more than prolong the heroic resistance and delay the inevitable overrunning of that unfortunate country. By the signing of the Soviet-German Pact on August 23rd, Poland had been doomed.

The other immediate effect of that pact was a happier one for the democracies. It alienated at one stroke the sympathies of all Germany's Anti-Comintern associates. Japan, disillusioned and disgusted at the conduct of an ally who could thus suddenly nuzzle in friendship the hand she had been so eager to bite, promptly turned her back on Europe. General Franco, whose newly organized Spain had so nearly joined the Axis, also saw something extremely incongruous, if not sinister, in this joining forces of the two ideologies that a short while before had been at each other's throats all over his country. He too decided to play no active part in the struggle, and made haste to assure France of his neutrality. And finally Italy, the oldest Axis partner, linked, moreover, since May 1939 in a formal military alliance with Germany, also announced her intention of staying on the neutral fence. She could hardly have done otherwise. The hatred of Bolshevism as a creed was far more deeply ingrained in her population than in Germany's, nor had Italians received from their Duce any such indication of future policy as Herr von Ribbentrop's smug "The Führer and Stalin have decided for friendship"—a hint from above which in totalitarian States is tantamount to a command to those below.

In other words, by his pact with M. Stalin, Herr Hitler had made certain of taking the Polish trick; at the same time he had thrown away three strong cards. His assumption, of course, had been that these cards would not be needed, because France and Britain, his more powerful adversaries, having lost that first trick, would not attempt to play their hands after all. Disillusionment on this point, however, could not set in till after Poland had been overrun, and his self-righteous peace-gesture to his western enemies had been rejected.

The overrunning of Poland went according to plan, more swiftly, indeed—thanks to the continued fine weather—than had been anticipated. By September 11th the German advance had absorbed that whole big western corner of Poland which curves out between East Prussia above and Slovakia below, over a quarter of the total area of the country.



M. STALIN
GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE U.S.S.R.

The valuable industrial regions of Silesia had thus passed to German hands, together with a score of important towns, and Warsaw itself was being hard pressed. The main Polish armies, however, had skilfully extricated themselves from the pincer movement that had threatened them. They were still unbroken and the defensive river line of the Vistula and Bug was yet intact and might possibly be held through a winter campaign. But the swift German successes had already had one repercussion: Russia was reported to be mobilizing upon her Polish frontier.

During the next week the German advance on Poland progressed surely but slowly. With the centre still held by Warsaw's gallant resistance, a new drive developed in the south. It aimed towards Przemysl—town of unpronounceable name and fame in 1914—and its object was to cut through to Lwow and beyond, and so sever Polish communication with Roumania. Again Russia began to loom up as an unexpectedly important factor in the German attack on Poland, for Lwow was only a hundred miles from the Soviet frontier, and by now it was estimated that some four million Russians were mobilized along that frontier. Moreover, preliminary *pouparlers* were suddenly set in train in Moscow for the arrangement of an armistice between Japan and the Soviet, who for a long time had been engaged in a *sub-rosa* war on the borders of Manchukuo. Everything, indeed, pointed to a closer focusing of Russian interest on the Polish-German situation.

The Russo-Japanese Armistice was swiftly negotiated, and hostilities between the two countries ceased on September 16th. Satisfied as to her back door, Russia did not waste time in turning round to attend thoroughly to the front. With a haste that suggested she had only been waiting for the conclusion of the Japanese Armistice as a signal, she steered the war into a new and startling course.

For in the small hours of the following morning Russian troops crossed the Polish frontier at several points. The official reason given was that the break-up of the Polish Government "converted Poland into an easy prey for all manner of events and surprises which might constitute a threat to the U.S.S.R. In addition, the Soviet Government cannot consider with indifference the fate of their blood relations—the Ukrainians and White Russians—living in Poland and left to their fate without protection."

These were noble words to cover what was, in effect, a direct act of aggression by a self-confessed neutral State against a country with whom

it actually had at that very moment a pact of non-aggression with six more years to run, a country, too, already fighting for its life and unprepared for such a treacherous blow from the rear. But words have never yet been used by totalitarian States as anything but a smoke-screen to cover the truth, or a preliminary barrage to justify unjustifiable action. As if confirmation of this verbal chicanery were needed, the Soviet followed her announcement up with separate formal pledges to twenty-four States of her strictly neutral intentions towards them. One of these States, incidentally, was Finland.

Even though it had been anticipated from the events of the previous week that Russia was not going tamely to allow Germany to sweep over Poland and carry the swastika flag up to the Russian frontier, the Soviet attack caused almost as much consternation in France and England as had the pact of four weeks before. Russia, a neutral benevolent to Germany, had been at last accepted as an uncomfortable reality ; now Russia was on the move, had never apparently intended to remain neutral in any accepted sense of the word. Where would M. Stalin stop, and what exactly was he after were questions on the lips of all in France and England.

Those who took a gloomy view could at first only see that Communist Russia, bitter enemy of democracy, had now in practice as well as theory joined forces with the equally bitter enemy, Nazi Germany. Others, less despondent, inclined to the belief that it was more of a surprise to Herr Hitler than to anyone, that he had not reckoned, when he made friends with M. Stalin, to lose half the spoils of war to that same friend. Hostilities over Poland's dead body were even prophesied when the two Armies should meet.

Except in the minds of that hard red core of rabid Left-Wingers, who still subscribed to the creed " My Russia, right or wrong," there was now no longer any doubt in England and France that the Soviet régime was no more genuinely Communistic than the Third Reich. In particular Labour everywhere violently and virulently condemned Russia's action. Disillusioned Socialists could no longer remain blind to their idol's feet of clay. Those of Liberal and moderate views who hitherto had steered a middle political course, despising the extremists on either hand and holding that " one was as bad as t'other," suddenly saw, almost with delight, their theories vindicated. It was now convincingly proved that the Soviet was just another totalitarian State, with a Dictator, an all-powerful " Party," a dreaded and ubiquitous secret police, mass trials and con-

centration camps, an internal technique of purging, liquidating, and suppressing all hostile or even critical elements within itself, and an external policy as aggressive in action and contemptuous of the rights of other nations as Nazi Germany's.

That M. Stalin had not disclosed the latter side of nationalist Russia so openly before was because it had been Germany's hour, not his. It was renaissance Germany, lopped by the Treaty of Versailles, that had the urge, and the scope, to expand, not vast Russia, then consolidating herself economically and materially within her own boundaries. But now M. Stalin's hour had come; it was his turn for an Austria and a Czechoslovakia. Unless he struck quickly he would see Germany occupy *his* Polish Ukraine under his nose, thence moving her armies up into the Eastern Baltic, and even while he struggled with that problem, turning to follow her equally unwelcome *Drang nach Osten* dream down to Roumania and the Black Sea.

So on September 17th M. Stalin moved, and Germany hastened to announce that his action had her full approval. Any lingering doubt in men's minds as to the entire similarity of his rule and methods with those of his opposite number, Herr Hitler, vanished when, on September 18th, simultaneous statements were issued from Moscow and Berlin declaring that their Armies were in Poland to undertake the "task of restoring peace and order." Their respective régimes were fundamentally as like as two peas in the same diseased pod.

The British attitude towards the changed face of events was formally stated that same day. It was announced that the "attack made upon our Ally at a moment when she is prostrate in the face of overwhelming forces brought against her by Germany cannot in the view of H.M. Government be justified by the arguments put forward by the Soviet Government."

The situation continued to crystallize, and in England and France the first welter of bewilderment and dismay, of conflicting beliefs, opinions, fears, and hopes began to settle down. It was soon obvious—though presumably those in the inner ring had suspected it ever since the Anglo-Russian negotiations had broken down—that this new development was Russia's bargain with Germany for earlier withholding her adherence to the Peace Front. Poland was to be carved up between M. Stalin and Herr Hitler. They were but a pair of gang-leaders, "moving their mobs in" on a good thing, dividing the "territory" in which their "rackets" were to be run, agreeing not to "muscle in on each other." That Russia

had acted so quickly and so decisively merely showed that M. Stalin did not trust Herr Hitler's word any more than one gang-leader would trust a rival—and possibly with even greater reason. His best way of making sure of the promised payment was to put it in his own pocket without waiting for it to be handed him.

The Russian advance, therefore, was pushed forward as rapidly as possible. It was in any case swifter than that of the Germans, being a surprise attack from the rear ; indeed, many Polish units found themselves inexplicably surrounded by the " enemy " while in reserve, being totally unaware that any Russians were in their country. This speed enabled a big tactical success to be scored over Germany. Soviet troops managed to forestall the Nazi armies in occupying all the south-east corner of Poland along the Roumanian border, thus cutting off Germany from direct access to Roumanian wheat and oil. Hardly the act of a " benevolent neutral," but Dictators are accustomed to act first and argue afterwards.

The Russian and German Armies met formally at Brest-Litovsk—ironically enough the same town where twenty-one years previously Germany had " put her foot on Russia's throat." This time, after exchanging mutual congratulations on each other's prowess, the Germans retired, leaving the town to the Russians, while Herr Hitler's subsequent speech declaring that Germany had come to a satisfactory agreement with Russia seemed to lack conviction. He had no doubt found he was not now dealing with an Austria or a Czecho-Slovakia.

The reason for his lack of enthusiasm was soon apparent, when the terms of the agreement for division of the spoil were announced three days later on September 21st. Though this agreed division was not then final, it was fundamentally the same as that laid down on the formal pact ultimately arranged in Moscow at the end of the month. Ethnographically the correct boundary between Poland and Russia was that known as the " Curzon Line," which had been originally suggested to those countries in 1919. Neither Russia nor Poland would then accept this line and as the result of hostilities and the Treaty of Riga in 1921 the Poles extended eastwards and secured the frontier which obtained till September 1939, when Russia's surprise advance carried her troops forward to roughly the Curzon Line, where they encountered the Germans. But by the German-Soviet agreement as to the zones of Poland to be occupied, the Russian line was carried still farther westward, German armies being forced to retire where recently they had advanced.

This agreed line, in fact, was, very roughly, a line north and south through Warsaw, and gave Russia nearly two-thirds of Poland to Germany's third. Germany retained the coal and industrial regions, but Russia got the Polish-Ukrainian wheatfields, the forests and even the oil-fields of Galicia. Moreover, Russia still maintained her position athwart the door to Roumania. Though there was some talk of a buffer Polish State being ultimately called into being between Russia and Germany, it was generally felt that this would not make any vital difference, and would, in fact, be a mere political fiction. In any case, when the terms of the Moscow Pact of September 29th were finally announced, no such Polish State appeared and the division of Poland was much as stated above. The price that Herr Hitler had had to pay M. Stalin for "torpedoing" the Peace Front had indeed been a heavy one, and the democracies gathered comfort from the fact that Germany could not be entirely happy about her new-found friend, and would probably be even less happy in the future.

Once M. Stalin had started upon the game of power-politics after the Nazi manner, he did not waste time. He concentrated on his next objective—the Baltic States—and, still in the best Nazi tradition, summoned the Esthonian minister to Moscow. By September 27th the next move of the familiar game had been played. Esthonia was accused of an unfriendly action, in that she had allowed a Polish submarine to operate in her territorial waters and sink a Soviet ship. Reprisals were threatened, and Esthonia of necessity gave in. She agreed to recognize her powerful neighbour as her official protector, and made over certain Esthonian ports and air bases to the Soviet.

That Russia was now reckoned one of the most powerful factors in Europe, having even sat at table with Germany and not risen hungry—though she was developing a good appetite elsewhere—was at once recognized, and Moscow became an increasing hive of diplomatic activity. The Turkish Foreign Minister arrived on a visit; Hungary restored diplomatic relations; Britain considered the possibilities of a Trade Pact; and on September 26th Herr von Ribbentrop, breaking with the old Nazi custom of summoning others to Berlin, was himself "invited" to Moscow to discuss the Polish "developments." While, with the surrender of Warsaw, Poland finally foundered, the world anxiously awaited the results of this ominous meeting, which was conducted in great secrecy and at high speed.

Three days later, on September 29th, the announcement of the new Soviet-German Treaty of Friendship was made. Poland was to be divided roughly as already stated, but the most important part of the pact was a

strong hint that Britain and France should now make peace with Germany, there being nothing further to fight about. This suggestion, however, was, over nearly the whole world, appreciated in its true light, namely, in the form of a simile; the burglar, having looted the house, is anxious to be friends with the police. The hint was accompanied by the threat that if France and Britain did not agree, theirs would be the responsibility for war, and that, as a result, the Soviet and Germany would confer further as to what line to take, the inference being that that line might well be military alliance. In any case, Russia undertook to supply Germany's economic needs and thus help to defeat the crippling British blockade.

For the third time in twice as many weeks Russia had exploded a bombshell. Peace, it seemed, was to be had but at the price of condoning aggression and allowing the aggressor to profit. Apart from the fact that by then hardly a soul in Britain or France had the faintest belief in any arrangement based on—as this would presumably have to be—Herr Hitler's pledged word, there could only be one answer. The democracies abruptly refused to consider peace on any such terms, and remained unmoved by the threat of closer Soviet-German rapprochement. Mr. Winston Churchill summed up the situation in a world broadcast: "It was for Hitler to say when the war began, but it is not for him, or his successors, to say when it will end." Later on, on October 3rd, the Premier, in his formal reply to this peace move, stated in the House of Commons that Britain's attitude remained unchanged, and that assurances from the German Government were of no value, for it had so often been shown that "their undertakings are worthless, when it suits them they should be broken." In short, this third Russian bombshell was received with dignified calm and a refusal on the part of Britain and France to be stampeded by hints or threats.

Apart from any other consideration, that the threat of joint military action was thus taken at face value only was almost certainly due to the recognition in Britain of the fact of Russia's true aims. Her latest move was seen merely as part of M. Stalin's promise to Herr Hitler to support him diplomatically in his attempt to retire and live for a while on the proceeds of his Polish deal. Russia's armed forces, however, were to be reserved for herself, for any offensive action required to secure control of the Baltic, and in a lesser degree for any defensive action deemed necessary to prevent too powerful a German drive down into the Balkans and Roumania. In plain words, M. Stalin did not trust Herr Hitler at any point, and would only help him in so far as it did not conflict with Russia's

national aspirations. More and more the world was seeing Herr Hitler as dancing involuntarily to M. Stalin's tune. More and more the world wondered how long this strange partnership of mutual distrust, while aiding each other to grab, would last ; how soon it would be before Herr Hitler and M. Stalin grabbed at the same thing and came to blows. Some even professed to see Britain and France in the not-so-distant future allied with Germany and Italy against the westward spreading menace of Communism.

As to the other point in the Treaty of Friendship—Russia's promise of economic help for Germany—opinion was more divided. Pessimists saw in it the opening of the doors of a vast storehouse of all that Britain was seeking to deny Germany by her blockade—the petroleum, manganese, corn, copper, and so on, with which Russia was stuffed. How could Britain blockade Germany under such circumstances, against the formidable combination of Russia's unlimited resources and German organizing ability ?

Optimists, on the other hand, had much to say. Russia's resources might be unlimited in theory, but in practice they were as yet largely unexplored. They could not be turned on like a tap, at the signing of a treaty. Russia was barely producing enough for her own consumption at the present low standard of living. To take one example, her output of pig-iron and steel was less in October 1939 than it had been for October 1938, and the manganese supplies had temporarily run out altogether. Furthermore, even were Russia willing to aid Germany economically at the expense of her own population, the question of transport was a vital one. Russian oil, for instance, was many hundreds of miles away from where Germany wanted it, and the transport facilities were bad, being further hampered by a difference of gauge in the Russian and German railway systems. In other words, Russian economic aid for Germany was looked on as more of a bogey on paper than anything else ; at best it could not become effective for at least a year.

While German diplomacy during early October continued to strive vainly by means of official statements, speeches from her Führer, and third-party intervention to secure peace on the pleasant basis of "What I have I hold," Russia began to draw a little aloof. She had played her part for others ; now she had her own game to attend to. The Latvian and Lithuanian ministers were invited to Moscow, and, following the example of Esthonia, hurriedly placed their countries under Soviet care, with ports, islands, and air bases, trade and transport facilities, as an

earnest of good faith. By the middle of October, after a bare score of years of independence, the three East Baltic States were virtually back where they had been—under Russia's domination.

It is certain that Germany's naval leaders viewed this gradual increase of Russian influence in the Baltic with considerable distrust and apprehension. It was a reversal of all their previous strategy and, engaged already in war, as they were, with two great Powers, they were hardly in a position to prevent it, particularly as the offender was a "friend." Moreover, they were not certain that, even had they wanted to, it would have been allowed. Half of Poland had not been M. Stalin's only price for his support of German policy: a free hand in the Baltic had been the most important part of the bargain. And about the freedom that this hand was to have there could be no doubt; for Germany's valuable spearhead in those regions was even withdrawn, when all Baltic Germans were forcibly repatriated, many of them after having been settled in the Baltic States for over a century. Herr Hitler was indeed paying in full.

Having lost interest in Europe's preoccupation with the Hitlerian peace proposals—all doomed to failure from the start because there would only be Herr Hitler's word to implement them—M. Stalin went grimly ahead. The Eastern Baltic and the south side of the Gulf of Finland being now secured, he turned his eyes north of the Gulf and asked Finland to send a representative to Moscow.

Finland, however, better placed strategically than Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, who lived right under the Russian shadow, was not inclined to come to heel at once as they had done. She demurred for a while, and when eventually she agreed, she called up her reserves at the same time. Russia would not have such an easy nut to crack on this occasion. Nor could other countries remain quite so indifferent; for Norway and Sweden were actual territorial neighbours of the newly threatened State. All Scandinavia, in short, was concerned in this latest Russian move. So Finland, with the eyes of the world upon her, joined in conference with Russia on October 10th.

On October 13th the Finnish delegation returned with the Soviet proposals. If not reasonably acceptable—and since they contained demands for the handing over of islands in the Gulf of Finland, a military alliance with Russia, cession of territory in close proximity to Lenin-grad, and non-fortification of the Aaland Islands at the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia, they were hardly likely to be—Finland was determined to

reject them. She could not be threatened so effectively as the previous victims, and she knew she had all Scandinavia behind her. At the same time she was under no delusions as to Russia's possible reaction to defiance: her large towns were being evacuated, universal national service had been decreed, and defences were being manned.

In a few days the delegation set out again for Moscow. Fortified by a joint declaration with the other three Scandinavian nations of a resolve to maintain their traditional neutrality at all costs, it had brought counter-proposals. Finland had not weakly knuckled under. Slight though it was, this was really Russia's first reverse since she had entered the arena in April, though no doubt she only looked on it as a brief setback, to be easily remedied by time and further threats.

In quite a different class, however, was another diplomatic reverse occurring about the same time, when Turkey abruptly recalled her Foreign Minister, who had been in Moscow since September 26th, and broke off negotiations. Russia's demands, it was stated, were at variance with the terms of Turkey's forthcoming treaty with France and England. M. Stalin had asked that Turkey should agree to close the Dardanelles if war broke out between the Soviet and the Allies. No doubt he was foreseeing the *imbroglio* with Finland and its possible repercussions, but he had evidently underestimated the strength of Turkey's attachment to the democracies, misled, no doubt, by their delay in signing the treaty. This delay, however, had only been to give Turkey a chance to negotiate a pact with Russia as well and for any necessary adjustment resulting therefrom, in the hope that a reasonable Russian-Turkish agreement might serve to prevent the war spreading by restraining Germany in the south-east. There was now no further cause to hold it up.

Two days later, therefore, the Anglo-French-Turkish Pact was formally signed amid great jubilation on both sides. It was a great diplomatic triumph for the democracies. The Finnish delegation meanwhile, after twenty-four hours' intensive discussion, had once more gone back to Helsinki with counter-proposals, which the Russians described as final.

At this point Russia found herself embarrassed by the arrival at Murmansk of a captured American merchant ship, *City of Flint*, in the charge of a German prize crew, and had difficulty in reconciling her attitude to her German partner with her publicly expressed declarations of strict neutrality. Release of the ship without the American crew, but still carrying the prize crew uninterned, did not make for increased friendship between the U.S.A. and the Soviet.

At the end of October Finland again rejected the Soviet proposals. Though the idea of a military alliance had been dropped, Russia was still demanding naval bases off the Finnish coast, the cession of Finland's sole ice-free Baltic port, Hangö, which was right in the south-west of Finland, some two hundred miles from the nearest part of Russia, domination of Finland's sole ice-free Arctic port at Petsamo, and an exchange of Finnish frontier territory near Leningrad for a large barren area adjoining the Karelian portion of mid-Finland. The rejection was announced on October 31st in an important speech on Soviet policy by M. Molotov. The speech had been eagerly awaited by the world, because it had been rumoured that a startling and unpleasant surprise was in store for Britain and France. This was interpreted as referring to that clause in the German-Soviet agreement of September 29th which provided for "joint consultation on the subject of necessary measures" should France and Britain continue the war. M. Stalin, it was feared, was going to play another trump-card for Herr Hitler by entering into a full military alliance.

The speech, however, turned out to be more of a disappointment for Germany than a surprise for the democracies, for no such alliance was mentioned. It consisted of the statement on the Finnish situation, a hopeful announcement about future economic co-operation with Germany, a reiterated accusation that Britain and France were now solely responsible for continuing the war, and an outline of the Soviet attitude and policy, which was of course stated as one of continued neutrality, and of working for peace.

The discussions in Finland were then renewed in Moscow in an atmosphere of tension. Finland had come prepared to make concessions; but these were not enough to satisfy Russia, who held to her point, that the mere presence of the Finnish boundary so close to Leningrad constituted a menace, not necessarily from Finland herself, but from any other country that might wish to use her as a jumping-off ground in operations against the Soviet. This menace, however, could have been no more real than it had been at the signing of the Russo-Finnish Pact in 1932, and so the excuse had an ominous ring.

Discussions continued through the first half of November in an increasingly bitter atmosphere, full of foreboding for the future. The Finnish Government made concessions up to a point, but was determined not to concede national independence. Russia was equally determined to secure the safety of her "vital interests," a phrase which in totalitarian

language had come to mean practically any desired goal, in this case the political and strategical subservience of Finland.

In these circumstances no compromise could be reached, and by mid-November negotiations had been finally broken off. Russia immediately opened a campaign of vituperation which seemed to be the customary verbal barrage prior to attack ; nor was Finland made any easier in her mind by remembering that she, like Poland, had a pact of non-aggression with her powerful neighbour. That Finland was actually charged with seeking war against Russia, that a bellicose four millions were eager to subjugate a peaceful one hundred and eighty millions, that nearly all denunciations were accompanied by accusations that Britain and France were the real aggressors, that at the same time poured forth a stream of protestations of the Soviet's strict neutrality in the war—all this would have seemed incredible had it not been realized that most of it was for Russian home consumption, food for her intended cannon-fodder. In all these attacks M. Stalin was faithfully supported by German official circles, but there could be little doubt that they viewed her growing dominance in the Baltic with considerable misgiving.

Though there were occasional lulls in the verbal warfare, Russo-Finnish relations during the latter part of November slowly and inevitably deteriorated, in spite of an appeal to the Kremlin by the President of the U.S.A. for fair play for Finland. (America, it must be remembered, had always had a particular sympathy for that small country as being the only one who had regularly kept up her War Debt payments.) M. Stalin had realized at last that he could not, as heretofore, compel acceptance of his terms by the simple massing of troops : he would have to strike in earnest.

On November 27th the next move in a well-known game was made when Moscow suddenly announced that Finns had fired on Red Army troops. A formal Note of protest was handed to the Finnish Minister, in which the accusation was made of "a direct hostile act against the Soviet Union." To even the most optimistic it now seemed certain that M. Stalin had determined to copy Herr Hitler's technique to the last detail, not merely, as in Poland, to march into a country already at war with another, on pretext of protecting nationals, but to march into a country at peace, in order to take by force what he wanted.

The Russian Note was rejected next day by the Finnish Government and the allegations denied, though it seemed that words would be of no avail if M. Stalin's mind were made up. Alarm grew throughout the whole of Scandinavia, as alarm must equally have spread in Germany at

the Soviet's continued aggression and expansion in the Baltic. But official Germany continued to voice approval of Russian policy. It was but part of her agreement for the free hand in the Baltic. Herr Hitler was taking his orders from Moscow.

Events moved swiftly to their climax. Russia, calling Finland's answer to her Note another "hostile act," denounced the pact of non-aggression of 1932. Before Finland had time to reply, to point out that the pact called for six months' notice of denunciation, and even after that the Kellogg Pact was presumed to hold good, M. Molotov in an unprecedentedly bitter speech announced the immediate breaking off of diplomatic relations, even as the U.S.A. was making a last-minute offer of mediation.

The Finns, expecting the instant commencement of hostilities, remained calm. Though they were in the same unenviable plight, *vis-à-vis* Russia as Poland had been *vis-à-vis* Germany in August, they were at least in a happier position for defence. They had friendly neighbours, not too powerful, but loyal, at their backs, instead of hostile and treacherous ones; and behind those friends were France and Britain, already fighting for the liberty of all small countries, such as themselves. And behind these was the particular sympathy of the U.S.A., which might not be without a practical side. In front of them, moreover, they had not the highly trained German armies of proved efficiency, but the Russian troops, whose prowess was based principally on their leaders' boasts, supported only by inconclusive skirmishes with Japanese and a surprise attack from behind in a country with which they had not been at war and which was already hard pressed from the opposite direction. On top of this, recent purges by the suspicious M. Stalin had removed most of the competent and experienced Russian officers from all services. The Finns had, too, compared with the Poles, an easier front to defend and terrain of a nature to which they were well accustomed; it could well be that against resolute defenders the vaunted Russian armies might turn out far more dangerous on paper than in action, might be held sufficiently long for outside aid to come. Finland did not face the future entirely devoid of hope.

On the last day of November, without any formal declaration of war, Soviet troops crossed the Finnish border at several points and Helsinki, the capital, was bombed from the air. Proletarian Russia had abandoned the last pretences—if she had any left—of being the one great State that stood out as the foe of all warmongering and the champion of all small nations striving to free themselves from Imperialism.

CHAPTER 7

THE COMMERCIAL FRONT

BY HAROLD SOREF

IN strong contrast with their behaviour in 1914, banking and financial circles accepted the outbreak of war in 1939 with complete calm.

On Thursday, July 30th, 1914, the Bank of England's rate was raised from 3 per cent. to 4 per cent., and on July 31st it was multiplied by 2, jumping from 4 per cent to 8 per cent. On that day some of the other banks were refusing to pay out their gold to their customers, and making them take payment in Bank of England notes. Consequently there was a long string of people, wanting money for the holidays, waiting to cash notes at the Bank of England. On Saturday, August 1st, the Bank rate went up to 10 per cent.

It is said the Bank inquired from the Treasury whether it was ready to go through the usual form of giving the Bank a letter of indemnity, promising that Parliament would be asked to condone the Bank's breach of the law by issuing more notes than was allowed by the restrictions of the Act; and that it was thereupon informed that the Bank Act had never before been suspended except when the Bank rate stood at 10 per cent. Thus in effect the Treasury, merely for the sake of blindly following an old precedent, practically told the Bank that the Act could not be suspended until the Bank rate stood at 10 per cent. And so, if this story be correct, the Bank was forced to raise its rates from 4 per cent. to 8 per cent. on the Friday and from 8 per cent. to 10 per cent. on the Saturday; it need hardly be said that such a movement at that time was quite ineffective for all purposes for which the Bank rate is usually raised, while its evil effects have already been described.

The reason for this almost panic activity was undoubtedly largely due to the fact that at that time there was a gold currency in Great Britain, and the golden sovereign carried the unbounded faith of the nation. At the first breath of war, therefore, every one who could visited his local bank to lay in a small store of gold coins while his wife went to the grocer to lay in a store of food. The result of this was that there

was what almost amounted to a run on the banks, who began paying out in Bank of England notes. The recipients then took these to the Bank of England to change them into gold, as they had a right to do. No one in the City who saw it will ever forget the sight of the crowds surging into the sedate building of the Bank of England (somewhat impeded by the reconstructions then in progress) in search of gold. Here there was a vicious circle. The fear that the Bank rate might have to be suspended created a further demand for gold, and the public demand for gold was at least indirectly responsible for the unprecedented rise in the Bank rate from 3 to 10 per cent. in the three days prior to the August Bank Holiday and before it was even certain that England would go to war at all. The Bank rate, then, was suspended, a Moratorium was declared, and the Stock Exchange was closed and remained so for five months.

It should here be pointed out that in a great industrial country like Great Britain a vast portion of commerce is carried on by means of loans. The interest rates on these loans, certainly so far as they come from the banks, are influenced largely by the Bank rate. Moreover, the security given against them to the banks is largely in the form of stocks and shares. If, therefore, the Stock Exchange is closed and the stocks and shares given as security to the Banks cannot be sold, the Banks are unable to obtain money at a moment's notice to pay their customers, for they can neither obtain the repayment of the loans nor realize their securities.

The introduction of paper currency in the form of the pound and ten-shilling Treasury notes during the war of 1914 undoubtedly changed the sentiment of the public towards money. It no longer has any fear of shortage, with the result that the outbreak of war in 1939 caused no such scare as in 1914. At the outbreak of the second World War the Government had long since stated in Parliament that, while food hoarding was to be deprecated, and would indeed be dealt with if necessary, when the time came, on the other hand the public had been advised that a reasonably well-stocked store-room was a sound precaution. Those people who could afford it, then, had gradually, in a period of months, purchased a few extra stores, with the result that there was no special rush to the provision dealers, and, with the knowledge that paper money was always available, there was no run on the banks.

The banks and the big commercial, financial, and industrial organizations too, having long since realized that war was almost inevitable, had secured premises in places considered unlikely to suffer from air raids in country districts and small provincial towns. Here they had transferred

such records and documents for safe keeping as they had considered necessary and such sections of their activities as could be carried on away from the danger zones of crowded cities.

In 1939, then, the banks were closed for the day only for the purpose of completing their reorientation, the Bank Act did not have to be suspended, and no Moratorium was required, though a few people, with memories of 1914, expected its proclamation. Within a week the Stock Exchange reopened and business was being carried on as usual, so far as banking and the public were concerned.

In spite of early gains after the Munich "settlement," commercial circles and the Stock Exchanges had sensed that Germany intended to continue her armed blackmail of Europe. The crushing blow administered to defenceless Prague therefore completely failed to surprise the shrewd industrialists and merchants whose thermometer is the Stock Exchange. These men had tightened their belts, shrinking their capital commitments to a point of cautious self-denial. Without a word of command from the Government, Industry had mobilized in response to Lord Baldwin's appeal. No scheme, however promising, was undertaken if it might delay the conversion of peace-time manufacture and distribution to war-time production. No long-term policy was undertaken in case war might come before it could bear fruit, and find its sponsors the less able to help in the national effort.

In 1914 the Prime Minister, then Mr. Asquith, had declared of our industrialists that he had never seen such a "spineless lot of ninnies, quivering and quaking at the thought of a war." Yet many declared in 1914 that we were fighting for trade. In 1939 Business recognized its obligations to the full, and met them with the same spirit of service as every other section of the community. Yet not a voice was raised in doubt of the integrity of our motives or the necessity of the struggle. This was no trade war. Britain had publicly renounced her claims for a sphere of commercial interest in Eastern Europe, so determined was she to satisfy any German claim which, even at a sacrifice for Britain, might avert what we knew to be the greatest possible calamity.

Perhaps that policy was not far-sighted. Certainly Germany took advantage of it, and proceeded to tighten the economic thumbscrew on Roumania. King Carol hastened to England and begged of the City of London their support. But Britain's commercial policy had been decided by the withdrawal of capital, and had we wished to support him, it was doubtful if, in face of the Nazi barrage, we could do

so in time. So Roumania was forced reluctantly to sign her agreement with Germany.

By this time the Polish question was becoming acute, and Britain decided to guarantee Germany's eastern neighbours against any further act of aggression. It was apparent that Hitler's ambitions knew no limit, and Britain's policy of appeasement had to be abandoned in commercial as in other spheres. Mr. Hudson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Department for Overseas Trade, gave the word of command in a speech exhorting British industry to fight unfair methods of competition obviously designed to secure to Germany the materials of war and ruin the export trade of her opponents.

Before this policy could be put into effective operation, however, Hitler launched his attack on Poland, leaving Britain weakened by the concessions she had made in the cause of peace.

The first effects of hostilities surprised no one more than business men themselves. Ready to close up commercial offices, or at least reduce staff drastically, they found that in many cases they were selling almost as much as ever. Ready for the same rush on the banks as had occurred in 1914, they expected prices to rise in a mild inflation. To meet the demand for ready cash, the Government made postal orders legal tender. Ready cash was certainly in demand for the purchase of black paper and other A.R.P. equipment, for extra pocket money to evacuated children, for deposits on cottages in the country, and for increased train fares. Yet no rush on the banks occurred, and postal orders were hardly utilized as currency.

It was during the years of waiting, of watching Hitler's shadow descending on Europe like a carrion crow, which made the common man in Britain and in France so steady, so sure of himself and his country, that trade in many commodities actually increased. It was realized, for instance, that many commodities must rise in price as foreign raw materials became more difficult to obtain, and the campaign to buy new suits had had an effect for which the advertisers themselves had scarcely hoped. The same held good for shoes, overcoats, and all those commodities the purchase of which the National Government had years before characterized as "wise spending."

It is, of course, easy to point out a multitude of specific causes for the steady volume of business transacted in all these articles. The obvious common-sense motive of buying before prices rose, the high salaries to be earned by men in reserved occupations with their prospect of compara-

tive security, the increase in employment, all contributed. But this is a description of the forms the desire to buy took rather than an analysis of the causes of buying. At rock bottom the cause was the preparedness and resolution of a great nation to see the struggle through to the end, for without this resolution no schedule of reserved occupations or threatened rise in prices could have tempted the savings of so many people from their lair. Only confidence in victory could create the will to spend.

To deny that there were black spots in those heroic first days would be foolish, yet many of the blackest had their explanation when the point of view of those concerned was fully appreciated. One such black spot was advertising. Many advertisers carried through bravely, determined not to give in at the first sign of adversity or to force their agents to throw men out of work. As things turned out, their courage was rewarded, and as advertising steadied to its new level they were credited for their spirit in the public eye. Many others, however, reduced their appropriation by many thousands of pounds, or even ceased to advertise, and for a time space in many papers fell to half its price.

Yet these firms can hardly be blamed. Advertising means widespread demand, and widespread demand means the obligation of supplying retailers in every corner of the land with goods which may never be demanded, or for which the materials of prolonged manufacture may not be available. In many cases large drapery and outfitting stores, both in London and in the provinces, were informed by their suppliers that, owing to war conditions, they were unable to fulfil their contracts for goods ordered several months previously.

Advertising was bound to suffer, also, owing to the increase in the cost of the paper used by journals, known as newsprint, which rose from £5 15s. a ton to £17 a ton. The national newspapers agreed to reduce their size. The four most popular dailies set themselves a limit of 56 pages a week, while the *Daily Telegraph* was allowed a slight excess in view of the number of classified advertisements carried. *The Times* limited itself to 96 pages and the two picture dailies to 112 pages each. An additional economy was effected by stopping free insurance schemes.

With the increase in the price of newsprint, less space was available for advertisements and the prices had to be raised. New schedules were widely issued in November, but most of the changes were not to become operative until the New Year.

The greatest single influence on trade was, of course, the War Budget. Severe as this was, however, it is interesting to note that it contained

only increases in the degree of impositions, and not taxes new in themselves. This system of increasing revenue had the advantage that only tried methods were employed; but because the increases were not spread out over more articles, and because in the main they were concentrated on direct taxation, they came as an even greater shock.

Sir John Simon had said in peacetime that the limit of direct taxation had been reached, but the exigencies of war proved how relative such statements may be. Income tax was raised from 5s. 6d. in the pound to 7s. 6d., with the reduced rate on the first £135 increased from 1s. 8d. to 2s. 4d. Sur-tax was also seriously raised, supplemented by increased estate duties, which are a direct capital levy. In some cases they were increased by 20 per cent. The policy of taking the fullest possible contribution from the rich was well served by the Excess Profits Tax of 60 per cent., replacing the old armaments duty. The poor also paid their share, however, with the extremely important indirect taxes of an extra penny a pint on beer, a penny a pound extra on sugar, and a penny halfpenny an ounce extra on tobacco.

The Budget changes by themselves were estimated to produce £226 million, and the contemplation of this figure is the best way of realizing how hard the increases would hit the country. The only section of the population to receive any concession was the class which could prove that its income had been reduced by as much as 20 per cent. as a direct result of the war.

Strangely enough, the Budget did not act as a setback on the Stock Exchange. Confidence was so great that prices were good even immediately following it. At the same time a remark of the *Statist* is worth recording. "We are not likely with a two thousand million pound Budget," it said, "to produce conditions in this country suitable for heroes to live in. On the contrary, the war itself is likely to be a terrible strain, followed by a prolonged period of endeavour at recuperation."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer issued an appeal to save all that was possible. Perhaps this was misunderstood, for it had an extremely deleterious effect on business, especially on that of small shopkeepers. None the less, Mr. Keynes the famous economist went still farther, alleging that saving should be made compulsory. This naturally aroused a great deal of criticism from liberty-loving people, much of it economically valuable. At the same time it has to be admitted that the criticism was purely destructive: no general alternative scheme was advanced.

The main point of the critics of the saving policy was that a serious

reduction in spending would increase unemployment. Money must be kept in circulation to help people to pay their taxes. As it was, many small business men were forced out of business, finding rates, taxes, and other overhead expenses too heavy to be able to continue. It was claimed that Sir John Simon's policy would take surplus wages away from the purchase of consumption commodities, through which channels they largely returned to the Exchequer in any case, and increase the evils already mentioned.

For the Government, it must be admitted that the purchase of National Saving Certificates requires for most people a considerable amount of preliminary saving, coupled with effort and resolution, and the propaganda to do so must therefore be launched in strong terms for it to have adequate effect. Besides, the national necessity for saving was so extreme that it might be worth sacrificing a certain proportion of the nation's internal commerce to meet it. Lastly, with so many men about to be enlisted in the fighting Services, and production about to increase, unemployment difficulties could be reckoned as only temporary. It is, after all, the object of a peacetime economy to increase the numbers of consumption commodities, not of a wartime economy: in war the paramount object is to increase the production and acquisition of the materials for the struggle to the highest conceivable maximum, and for this loans are necessary.

At the beginning of the war, the chief fear was profiteering, which did indeed occur, notably in black-out materials and sandbags. But the newspapers launched a powerful campaign against the "Sandlords" who made a profit out of their country's need, and the Government stepped in with control of prices. Within six weeks, too, a black cloth was standardized for black-outs at a cost of one and sixpence a yard. The authorities went further, making it a punishable offence for retail tradesmen to persuade customers to register with them for ration purposes on the allegation that otherwise they might not be sure of obtaining adequate supplies. At the same time, any housewife was permitted to place her name on the prospective list of any retailer she desired. Thus the freedom of the individual to choose her source of supply without threats or compulsion was assured.

No interference was at first made with the arrangements of private firms with their staffs regarding working hours. The black-out, however, imposed its own laws. Obviously the volume of trade was bound to diminish during those hours when no lighted shop window could be seen, and in the West End most shops closed at five or five-thirty throughout

September. Trading conditions were different, however, in the suburbs and in the provinces, where the only shopping time for many purchasers was after their day's work. Local rulings were accordingly introduced to meet the needs of purchasers and at the same time avoid so far as possible any unevenness in working conditions due to location of employment. There was, it is true, a half-hearted movement on the part of some employers to deprive their assistants of their half-holidays to make up for the shorter hours, but this was immediately squashed by the Government with general approval.

In the first fortnight of the war the three trades which benefited most were those of alcohol, tobacco, and cosmetics. In the War of 1914 Mr. Lloyd George had declared that "drink was a more serious menace than all the German submarines," and at first it seemed as though his words would have to be repeated. In the first week of the War of 1939 as much as 25 per cent. more alcohol was consumed than the average for a week in the preceding year. The causes were not far to seek. The enforced closing of all cinemas and places of entertainment in which a dangerously large number of people might be gathered together in the event of an air raid, coupled with the gloom of a half-lit home under black-out arrangements which, owing to the shortage of materials and the profiteering, were for most people only temporary, left open no other form of recreation. This and the psychological desire in times of stress to be in the company of fellow human beings—a desire motivating especially strongly the millions of town-dwellers living alone—amply accounted for the increased consumption. When the causes began to be understood, the increase was not regarded any more as the morbid and dangerous symptom it had seemed in the early days. And, sure enough, in proportion as the cinemas, dance-halls, and other places of entertainment reopened, and as the wartime life became the normal, the consumption of alcohol declined.

The increase in tobacco consumption needs no explanation. Tobacco's original popularity was due to its mild narcotic qualities, and the instinct to suck in times of nervous stress is innate. (By smoking tobacco, men and women are able to soothe their nerves and satisfy the same instinct as that which makes us purse our lips.)

According to the newspapers the increase in cosmetic consumption was due to the general refusal of womenfolk to look dowdy in uniform. But this explanation is not convincing. In the first place, it is hard to see why the change from civilian clothes to khaki should necessitate any increase in the cosmetics used by women who are in ordinary life seldom

seen without them. In the second place, the comparatively small numbers of women enrolled in the Services could not possibly account for such a tremendous increase.

The real explanations were two, one of them a little prosaic, one a little heroic. Women realized that, like so many other luxury articles, cosmetics would rise in price, and accordingly they laid in a stock. The second explanation was their desire to "put a brave face on it" and keep smiling. Now more than at any time they felt they must look their best.

If these three trades benefited especially in the earliest days of the war, it was because of a sudden increased demand following the declaration. The trade, however, which maintained the steadiest and most prolonged rise was that in food. The Government had advised housewives to lay in a week's supply of provisions. To lay in such a store within one or two weeks was, however, beyond the financial scope of many of the middle-class and working folk who comprise the nation. Besides, there is a natural desire to be on the safe side, and those people who could afford a few extra shillings a week tended to purchase more than the official week's ration. The rise in food purchase of a durable nature was therefore sustained, and the provisions trade as a whole felt a marked benefit, in spite of the decreased power of hotels and restaurants to purchase. This achievement was all the more remarkable considering that caterers in normal times constitute the largest individual food-buying group in the country, and it was precisely the caterers, hotel, and boarding-house keepers who suffered gravely by the outbreak of war. This will be seen more clearly when we deal with unemployment. It might have been thought that the hotels in reception areas would receive those who had previously resided in town hotels, and thus compensate in the aggregate hotel trading all over the country. But the reception areas tended to be country or holiday areas where prices were too expensive. Again, it must be remembered that the crisis developed, and the war broke out, long before the end of the hotels' summer season. There were many people who cut short their holidays, many who cancelled their plans and stayed at home, feeling that a holiday in the early weeks of the war, or even in the weeks preceding it, would not be worth the expense. The third factor leading to the decline of hotel business was the decision of many hotel-dwellers to join company for the duration and club together in renting country cottages. In London hotels suffered exceptionally owing to evacuation and the diminution of traffic in the city, tourist traffic ceased and numerous booking cancellations were received from the

provinces. Again, the after-theatre business was obviously cut with the decline of the theatre business itself, and many of the ordinary overhead expenses of the hotel business are not amenable to reduction. If the same standard is to be maintained, accommodation costs much the same whether it is booked or not.

Apart from all the normal causes of decline in the hotel trade, the difficulties were increased by the Government's decision to commandeer a large number of hotels for their evacuated departments. It was claimed that this commandeering was often reckless and extravagant, though it must be remembered on the Government's behalf that in the early days of the war they were working under extreme pressure against time, and that it is difficult to foresee accurately the exact accommodation any building will give when converted to quite new uses.

On the other hand, cases were reported of the Office of Works pulling out all the electrical and gas fittings and substituting in their stead unnecessarily expensive ones. A similar instance was the taking up of old linoleum and replacing it with new. In addition, there were many criticisms of the valuations made by the Office of Works.

Under these conditions it will be seen that the rise in food purchases by 4·2 per cent. during the month of August, when the evacuation movements, both private and official, were still far from complete, and the greater increase which followed, require some explanation.

The most important cause was undoubtedly the determination to devote whatever margin of the weekly income was left over, so far as possible, to the storage of provisions. But in the weekly budget of a family on the average income level, that margin is comparatively small. The average man seldom pays more than a shilling a week for life insurance, while visits to the cinema and perhaps ninepence for the football pools run away with an extremely large proportion of his potential savings. Therefore, when cinemas and places of entertainment are closed and football pools forbidden, each family finds itself with a noticeable surplus. In any individual instance this surplus, taken as cash, may be small. But in a nation of over forty million people a vast new stream of currency is diverted for the purchase of commodities. When it is realized that nearly the whole of this surplus, once the initial capital outlay to meet the first needs of war has been completed, is spent on food, the position at once becomes clear.

Moreover, the retail sale of food became an activity permissible only under licence of the Food Control Board, which issued a comprehensive

list of various classes of merchandise. The new licences attached not to the individuals who carried on the business, but to the premises where the business was conducted. The authorities found themselves confronted with two facts. In the first place, the number of food shops represented an unnecessarily generous provision of retail facilities for the public. Secondly, owing to the evacuation movements, the proportion of local shops to inhabitants gave rise to widespread irregularities. Now, the greatest number of shops are naturally found in the districts which were before evacuation the most thickly populated. As it is precisely these districts which have on the whole lost the greatest proportion of their inhabitants, prices in these areas were bound not to rise, for any retailer who attempted to take advantage of his customers threw himself open to the successful competition of his more scrupulous competitors. In this way, the food position was balanced.

Many retailers feared that the country would not in wartime be able to stand the burden of what the President of the Board of Trade called "the multitude of small traders." They were therefore anxious in many instances to rid themselves of their stock as soon as possible. It was generally felt that the new situation would give the authorities a good opportunity to effect economies in distribution, and eventually to rationalize the whole retail provisions trade by eliminating the redundant licences.

While the food trade felt no decrease, it was exceptional. Most retail trades were bound at the beginning to be deprived of much regular custom. In fact, in the West End of London retail trade early in September dropped between 60 and 70 per cent. of the normal. Subsequent improvement reduced this percentage between 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. in the case of the fashion trade, while trade in other more essential commodities returned to average.

On the other hand, retail trade in the Provinces experienced great activity, in many cases increasing by 100 per cent. This was due to the shift of population owing to the evacuation, which assumed the importance of a great migration comparable to the Second Industrial Revolution, by which the distribution of population was clearly reflected in the creation of factories in the South of England. In the same way the Provinces began to experience the beneficial effects of the accession of a large body of spenders, who, through fear of air raids, the lack of cheap train-travel facilities, and the black-out, all contrived to keep country buying firm, as they did not come to London for their shopping. With the return to cheap fares, London business began its return to normal.

Suburban retailers admitted that they benefited substantially from the custom of people who formerly shopped in town, and attributed the fact to higher fares, reduced transport services, and the black-out. The Managing Director of one of the largest Croydon departmental stores stated that the suspension of cheap tickets deterred many people from going to town, and that with the exception of 1937 his store had had the best September results for fifty years.

Hosiery, underwear, and particularly household linens were the busiest departments in drapery stores. The demand for the latter was so great that supplies of raw flax grew very low. The demand for fashions, which at the beginning of the war was negligible, similarly increased. This was partly due to the abnormal number of marriages, and also to the feeling that prices were sure to advance, in which case both the public and the merchant would find goods of greater value than liquid assets.

Woollen goods were so much in demand that there was little argument about prices from buyers, whether individual customers or in the trade. The demand for these goods by purchasers anxious to make provision for the winter before prices rose typified the movement to demand fashions which were practical. Many firms declared that they had never before received so many orders for woollen dresses. This demand was increased by the needs of thousands of A.R.P. workers of both sexes for warm clothing on duty.

Leeds travellers took more orders without samples than they had prior to the war—and at open prices. There were indeed restrictions on the variety and size of travellers' ranges owing to higher costs and petrol rationing, but, important as these factors would have been in normal times, the volume of business to be discounted on that behalf was slight.

The Board of Trade's figures for retail trade during the month of September showed an increase amounting to 20 per cent. or more in the four provincial areas of England and Wales and 12·3 per cent. in Scotland. London, on the other hand, with its evacuated population and transport difficulties, registered a drop of 27·5 per cent. in the West End and central district and 1·9 per cent. in the suburban area as compared with September 1938. Food sales rose by 11·7 per cent. in September 1939, the corresponding increase in the crisis of the same month in the previous year being 4·5 per cent. Central and West End London were the only districts showing a decrease, but it was a large one, amounting to 21·7 per cent. Increases elsewhere ranged from 2·8 per cent. in the suburban area to 18·2 per cent. in the south of England. Other merchan-

dise, which fell by 3·5 per cent. in September 1938, rose by 16·4 per cent. in September 1939.

In the Midlands and South Wales, and in the south of England, the increase amounted to 34·7 and 35·2 per cent. respectively, while in the two northern districts expansion was abnormal, exceeding 28 per cent. Trade in central and West End London, however, suffered a severe contraction, amounting to 28·4 per cent.

October trade showed a gain of 6·5 per cent. compared with October 1938. An appreciable rise was maintained in all provincial districts. London, however, showed a further contraction of 31·2 per cent. in the central area.

In spite of the fact that prices had shown an increase, the public had continued to buy. Although the increase in the purchase of foodstuffs was largely due to the desire of householders to lay in an emergency supply, it is interesting to note that the volume of food sales had shown a persistent upward trend throughout the year, which *The Economist* considered due to an improvement in the standard of living. On the other hand, the influence of the desire to accumulate stocks only raised food purchases to a figure slightly above that of the corresponding period in the previous year.

While most people seemed to have made their emergency purchases by the end of September, and the special rush for black-out material had largely stopped, the figures for retail trade in October were as large as those of September. None the less, the increases, compared with the same month the year before, fell from 13·9 to 6·5 per cent.

These movements of population, to which attention has already been drawn, coupled with the imminent prospect of military service for the heads of many families and the unemployment of those engaged in non-essential trades, raised many new problems regarding that ever-increasingly important section of retail trade—hire-purchase. Remembering that hire-purchase is concerned chiefly with the luxury trades, such as wireless, furniture, domestic appliances, and motor-cars, and that the consumption of these goods is bound to decline in wartime unless steps are taken to maintain the productivity and normal flow of activity, the problems raised in hire-purchase will be seen to have been acute.

While those who were formerly engaged in peace-time occupations found it difficult to keep up their instalments, though they did not doubt that the Government would in time make some arrangements to meet their needs, these difficulties were gradually offset by the steady increase of

employment in wartime industries and the numbers of people engaged in paid National Service. These men and women saved many hire-purchase firms from bankruptcy.

These factors, together with petrol rationing and the tendency for motor-cars to disappear, were even responsible for an increase in certain hire-purchase transactions. The two most noticeable increases were in battery wireless sets and push bicycles. People who had never before possessed wireless sets now bought them in order to hear the news and announcements, and bicycles to circumvent the petrol ration. In heavier goods, a long-term policy pursued by enterprising farmers began to show its effect in increased orders on the hire-purchase system for tractors and other agricultural implements. Moreover, this movement was not long in spreading itself in the purchase of the necessities of large-scale livestock production.

Of all trades affected by the war, none suffered more than the distribution of motor-cars. The rationing of petrol supplies, the possibility of cars being requisitioned by the military authorities, together with the risk of damage or total destruction by bombs, cut off nearly all selling possibilities as with a knife.

The absence of demand imposed on most companies the necessity for curtailing or completely abandoning production, especially as many of the factories could be converted to production in other channels. For example, the bulk of the work of one-time motor-car industries was now frequently diverted to the manufacture of aircraft in shadow factories. None the less, motor-car production by no means ceased, for much of the overseas demand remained, as well as, of course, the commercial vehicles required by the Government. Furthermore, executives of the motor industry reckoned with an increased demand for lorries and motor tractors to relieve the heavy pressure on the railways, caused by the necessities of troop movements and supplies. *The Times* calculated that, eventually, the war-time demand for commercial vehicles of all categories would greatly exceed peacetime needs, and this part of the industry might have to be expanded—either by converting factories previously engaged on the production of private cars or else by erecting new ones. At the conclusion of the war the whole industry will emerge from the melting-pot and will of necessity recast itself in a totally different shape. Production of specialized machines will cease abruptly and many lorries now required by the Army will be made available for private use. On the other hand, a large pent-up demand for new private cars should be released, and if the

experience of the last war is repeated, the present struggle will lead to a permanent civil demand for aeroplanes.

Thus the dislocation in the trades concerned with motor locomotion tended to be temporary, and in spite of the hardships experienced by garage proprietors and motor-car retailers, the general effect of the war was to redistribute labour and organization into allied works. It must also be remembered that the volume of the motor-car export trade did not diminish, and that many garages were requisitioned by the Government with compensation for the owners.

Some industries were not so lucky in finding new outlets, however, and between August 14th and September 14th 25,197 persons were thrown out of work in business and manufactures connected with entertainment and sport. The film industry had prepared by being the first to evacuate with the greater part of their stocks, having foreseen the closing of the cinemas. The last few days before war was declared had already seen this movement, while panic spread over Wardour Street, and many serious defects in the machinery of film distribution were revealed. The heads of the industry were wise to press their claims for an early if restricted reopening, but owing to the many complicated arrangements which have to be completed before a film can be shown to the public, it was found impossible by many firms to remain in the country. They returned post haste to London, but the price they had to pay for the double move was chaos.

None the less, although the hours of opening were soon extended, the important collection of cinema theatres in the West End of London found their chances of profit considerably reduced. People in the suburbs no longer came into the centre of the town in the black-out, rather patronizing local cinemas, especially now that the times of closing were made earlier.

Still, most cinemas could rely on good business during the times at which they were open, not only because of the natural desire for relaxation coupled with entertainment, but because cinemas are among the safest buildings structurally in the event of an air raid. At Home Office insistence, every cinema displayed a notice on the screen during the performance, to the effect that while the patrons would be warned, come what might, the show would go on.

It was also at the request of the Home Office that all news-reel units continued operations, and on the instructions of the War Office, their camera-men and technicians were exempted from military service.

One motive among others activating the authorities was, no doubt, the consideration of the years of painful endeavour which the British cinema industry had required to recover the ground lost in the last war. The varied techniques of film production are difficult and highly skilled, taking years to learn, and no Government which realized that the lives of many of these men might be sacrificed could fail to ignore what would be lost to propaganda and education. As it is, grave doubts have been expressed as to the ability of the film industry to make a speedy recovery from the depression already caused by official blundering and procrastination.

Luckily the question of supplies to exhibitors was not urgent, as on the outbreak of war there were enough good films in the country to last for six months. Hollywood producers were also quick to assure London that not only would their normal schedules be carried out, but that a number of extra films would be added next year.

Their plans looked like being frustrated, however, by the attitude of the Treasury. Britain is America's most important foreign market for film export, and spends annually about £7 million on that account. The Treasury foresaw the effect which the conversion of such a large sum would have in depreciating sterling, and Hollywood was forced to face the issue of a reduction of about 30 per cent. of their staffs or of recovering the use of their frozen credits by putting them into the British film industry.

After three months of war the British film industry certainly did not present a very healthy appearance. Only one film was in the making in the whole of the country, while out of twenty-six studios, twenty had been taken over by the Government for storage or some other purpose. The choice for Hollywood was not an enviable one, especially as the "cash-and-carry" system also threatened the export of films from America, whatever other financial arrangements might be concluded, and the technical staff was in any case not available for the full-scale production of British films.

Taking the difficulties of both countries into consideration, it seemed that the quality of the films must inevitably deteriorate. In the new circumstances Hollywood could not possibly maintain its rate of expenditure per film, and cheaper films, in spite of the example of the French, usually mean lower entertainment value. Even increased turnover by a rise in the price of cinema seats was a doubtful proposition, as the attendance at cinemas decreased on the outbreak of war and remained at a level

well below the average. In August, which is always a slack season, 19,000 out of 150,000 insured persons in the entertainment industry were out of work. But by September 11th the figure had risen to 45,000. On October 16th it was still over 40,000, while on November 13th it was 37,500. These figures are especially serious when it is remembered that most of the occupations concerned with entertainments are highly skilled, and, therefore, that the entertainments personnel find it difficult to obtain other employment. The entertainments industry is rather one which is continually absorbing new men and women for training, and not one which releases its employees for other occupations. The position was, however, irremediable so long as attendance remained at its low level; and though cinema-going is for many people habitual, provincial exhibitors were faced with an average attendance drop of 10 per cent.

Hollywood had failed in its policy of isolation, but British films still largely depended on Hollywood for their salvation, both in respect of the actual production of pictures to show to audiences and in finance for British companies to make their own. To some extent this problem was met by the Ministry of Information, who offered to give Mr. Korda the right to make and distribute "The Lion Has Wings" in return for half the profits, and both the Ministry of Information and the British Council proceeded to busy themselves with the production of other films.

Whilst no instructions were received from the Government that studios should cease production, the directors felt it wise to close down temporarily in view of the domestic situation and the reluctance of the City to finance new programmes. The vast sums of money which the City was considering lending to the film industry in view of the rationalization and economy which had taken place before the war were diverted to industries engaged in work of greater national importance. Secondly, the creative brains at every large studio were unwilling to think out ideas before they knew what new forms of entertainment would be most suited to wartime needs. However good the houses obtained by cinemas, the restriction of hours, cutting off the possibility of receipts at all late in the evening, resulted in a fall to half of box-office returns up to September 15th.

Lastly, the film industry waited for instructions from the Government to occupy themselves with short propaganda films, undertaken before the war by various Government film units. While these had been extremely successful in dealing with matters of interest concerning Government services and such matters, displaying considerable technical ability, it was

apparent immediately they produced their first attempt at propaganda that they did not possess the detailed knowledge of audience reactions to produce successful wartime shorts. Their film on Air-raid Precautions evoked uproarious laughter in almost every cinema in which it was shown. The professional film companies, on the other hand, had long ago evolved formulæ for every sort of reaction, even to the extent of timing the lengths of emotional effect. They were generally supported by the Press in their desire to see such a vital matter entrusted to their hands.

The position in the film industry can be summed up by saying that there, as elsewhere, factors which seemed to presage a gloomy future began to equalize out. The Government realized the importance of films in preserving the cheerfulness and morale of the people and the importance of a medium in which to display propaganda and send messages convincingly home to the public. Paris and Warsaw, too, had provided examples, for in both these cities cinemas had remained open since the outbreak of hostilities. Accordingly, as a result of a letter from the President of the Board of Trade to the Cinematograph Films Council, a committee was set up to deal with the requirements of the industry in wartime.

But disorganization, in spite of the determined efforts to prepare for war which we have mentioned, was not peculiar to the film and motor-car industries. Almost every industry came under the influence of Government control, and in almost every case the control was more far-reaching than had been anticipated. Restrictions were imposed and it was forbidden to make what were officially described as excess profits. All this came as an addition to the demands of the trade unions and the fresh controls brought into existence by a demand for war supplies. None the less, this control was welcomed by industry as a whole, not only owing to its determination to make every sacrifice in the nation's interest, but from its own point of view as well. In the War of 1914 control had not been nearly as stringent, yet the three firms which made the most enormous profits had all been obliged to seek Government aid in order to stave off bankruptcy when hostilities were over and they had to return to peacetime production. Rather than allow such a situation to repeat itself, firms willingly submitted to any control which might be imposed on them. On the Monday after the declaration of war, commodities already came under the control of the Ministry of Supply, with reference to both supplies and prices. Wool, rayon, jute, timber, iron, cereals, together with tea, canned meat, and cattle, were the first to be regulated, and this resulted in a temporary interruption of

trading on the commodity markets. The only major market which carried on business during the early days of war was the Liverpool Cotton Market, owing to the enormous trade demands. Supplies of most world-trade commodities were subject to Controllers appointed by the Ministry of Supply with the object of regulating supplies according to national necessities, with preference for vital purposes, and also with a view to controlling prices. Maximum prices were fixed, and sales to consumers were only possible under licence. Immediately the maximum prices were fixed, the commodity markets reopened. In addition to other controls, a rationing system introduced into the supply of wool tops and yarn for civilian purposes was announced in ample time to enable manufacturers to prepare their plans for the future. Meanwhile, of course, this control resulted in a considerable loss of business to merchants and brokers.

In spite of all efforts, it was inevitable that prices should rise, and the Prices Bill could only give a powerful check to what the President of the Board of Trade subsequently called "the vicious spiral of rising prices and rising wages." No measure could completely check, for instance, the rise in food commodities, when the imports from Scandinavia suddenly became so much more difficult to acquire.

By November 1st, according to the index figure of the Ministry of Labour, food costs had risen to 54 per cent. above those of July 1914. This was a rise of four points, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., since September 30th. The four articles which sustained the greatest rise in prices were, in order, eggs, bacon, meat, and butter, though the rise in the cost of eggs was as much owing to seasonal causes as it was due to the difficulties of importation from Scandinavia. Though the Ministry of Labour's index figures are still based on the purchasing habits of twenty-five years ago, there is little reason to suspect that there is any substantial change in relation to the consumption of eggs, and they may therefore be taken as substantially accurate.

Though food prices rose more generally than any other, there were, none the less, decreases in the price of certain specific foodstuffs, such as fish and margarine. On the other hand, though the rise in clothing prices was on the whole not so large, it is very difficult to name any article of clothing of which the cost was reduced, and clothing took second place to food in the list of greatest increases in cost to the public.

On November 1st the official cost-of-living index figure was 69 per cent. above that of July 1914, as compared with 65 per cent. on September 30th, 1939. After three months of war, the cost of living had risen by

fourteen points, one and a half of which were accounted for by the additional tax on sugar.

Wholesale prices rose 7 per cent. during November, making a total war increase of about 25 per cent.

These rises were not altogether pernicious. In many instances pre-war price-levels had been uneconomic, and all the war did was to force them up to a level at which industry could function efficiently. The problem of wartime prices was indeed not to keep prices low for the sake of low prices, but to ensure an uninterrupted flow of essential supplies, to set industry on a sound footing, and finally to ensure that costs should not soar disproportionately.

The rise in the cost of living was immediately met by a rise in wages in those large sections of industry which had sliding scales. Miners received an increase of eightpence per shift, cotton workers an increase of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., while the minimum rates of railway employees were raised, in addition to many small concessions.

The rise in prices was further offset by the considerable additional pay often received through overtime, and the fact that, with the dilution of skilled labour, many workers accustomed to receiving unskilled rates now obtained the same pay as their skilled fellows.

The November increases in wages were worth £20 million a year. In addition to their rises per shift, the miners pressed for an additional cost of living supplement. The Engineering Union felt itself forced to ask to be released from its six months' wage truce. *The Times* urged the control of wages, pointing out that a net increase in weekly wage rates in November had amounted to £350,000. Two million workers at least were affected by the increases granted in September and October, and the *Economist* estimated that as many again were affected by increases granted subsequently in the building, furniture, wool-combing, other textile and numerous miscellaneous trades.

These increases were not all to be accounted for by the rise in the cost of living. In many industries there was shortage of labour, especially in Lancashire and in the aircraft industry. As regards textiles, which enjoyed a considerable revival in the home market, the increased costs of materials and labour were a disadvantage in the export market, and the *London Evening Standard*, in recommending the shares, qualified its statements by insisting on a tremendous drive to increase the export trade.

Attention was called to the dangers of uncontrolled wage increases,

which, if pursued without any direction, might well lead to inflation which, in its turn, would certainly worsen the condition of the workers. Secondly, it is in direct contrast to the policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget speech, calling for financial sacrifices on all sides. Increased wages mean that industry is spending money which might otherwise be saved and diverted more directly to the nation's needs. Taxation was largely increased in order to reduce private consumption, so that the money might be transferred to national production. Increased wages, it was claimed, would have the reverse effect, because people would be encouraged to spend.

It remained to be seen how the interrelation of wages and prices would be affected by the first Order made by the Board of Trade under the Prices of Goods Act, which, though issued, would not come into force until January 1st, 1940. The Act would make it a criminal offence to sell "price-regulated goods" at more than their price on August 21st, 1939, plus an increase representing the actual rise in costs and expenses. The list of goods, whilst comprehensive, was not exhaustive, dealing mainly with articles purchased by men of average-income levels. For example, men's suits which cost retail anything up to £4 5s. cash on August 21st would from the introduction of the Act become "price-regulated goods." Such methods, it was hoped, would eliminate some of the anti-social practices of the War of 1914 without putting fetters on necessary economic readjustments.

The war effected fewer changes than might have been expected in the employment situation. During the twelve months ending in June 1939, there had already been large transfers of labour to the armament industries and a considerable increase in employment, for the rearmament programme had already gone a long way towards putting at least the heavy industries on a war footing, the industries most directly affected increasing their employment roll by nearly a quarter of a million people. So steady, and so great, had been the rise that the further increase in these industries between June and the outbreak of the war was scarcely measurable statistically.

The aircraft industry absorbed the largest numbers of personnel, increasing its workers by nearly 74,000, or 18 per cent. *The Times* pointed out that the increase in the staffs of firms of public contractors was partially due to the number of aerodromes which had to be constructed, adding 35,000 to the numbers engaged in such firms, and this increase must, therefore, like that in the metal industries, be linked with

rearmament. The increase in the metal industries was naturally smaller, since the pressure of extra work came less suddenly, and since the country depends on them so largely for the satisfaction of peacetime needs. Taken all round, the increase in the different spheres of metal-working and manufacture averaged 3 per cent., but employment in brass, copper, and zinc manufacture rose by 5,070, or 9·8 per cent.

London suffered more than any other part of the country through unemployment after the outbreak of war, sustaining a rise of 55,000 in one month. The chief reason for this was undoubtedly the decision of many firms to evacuate and work with depleted staffs in the country, in places which were often inaccessible to their permanent employees. This in its turn led to losses to those firms for whose work constant touch with Government departments was necessary, since the departments concerned tended either to stay in London or to remove to different localities again from those used by the private firms. Another reason was probably the concentration round London of many luxury industries, and as trade returned to normal, this would partly account for the greatly improved employment situation in November as compared with October. These figures were, however, still infinitely worse than those of August, and Mr. Keynes alleged that the national output was scarcely greater after three months of war than before the war started.

Examining the unemployment figures in detail, there certainly seems to be some reason for this statement. It is true that the decline between October and November was 28,050, but this figure was much smaller than had been expected, considering the repeated promises of the Government that the war would be waged wholeheartedly, and considering too the mass of ministerial talk about "industrial mobilization." Though it might be argued on the other side that it was a great step forward to obtain a decline at all, considering evacuation and the fact that a seasonal increase in unemployment is ordinarily expected in October, this is offset when it is taken into account that a large proportion of the decrease was among women and girls, and that a million and a half men had been called to the colours, not to mention the numbers diverted to civil defence. The general conclusion must be that the war effort of the Government was not up to the standard of which it spoke, since if the alternative conclusion is taken, namely that most of the work of war preparation had been completed before the outbreak of hostilities, then many of the statements of Ministers as to what the Government intended to do are rendered meaningless, if not hypocritical.

Birmingham was exceptionally busy from the start. Apart from the heavy industries, which naturally benefited first, relatively small industries, such as the jewellery and fancy-trade industries, leapt ahead. Since the summer the inquiry for diamond goods had steadily improved, the bulk of the business being connected with wedding and engagement rings. The reasons for this increase were not so much that people were in search of tangible security against possible inflation, but rather the tremendous rise in the number of weddings as menfolk were required for military service. Replicas of regimental badges, and also various kinds of jewellery and silver wear mounted with crests, were in great demand. In addition, brooches, cigarette cases, and compacts bearing the initials of National Service organizations found a promising market, and Service-type watches sold briskly. Identification disks in silver, with a small proportion in gold and platinum, enjoyed an exceptionally good run, and chainmakers and engravers in consequence worked overtime.

Large stocks of precious metals remained, but supplies of metals and stones for cheap jewellery, which largely came from Czecho-Slovakia and Austria, were by the outbreak of war already dangerously diminished. The demand for clocks and watches advanced increasingly as the prohibition of imports looked like continuing into 1940. The British manufacture of watch cases was stimulated now that cheaper goods in this line were unobtainable from Germany.

Similarly affected were machine tools, chemicals, electrical appliances, and scientific instruments, many of which had hitherto been specialized manufactures imported from Germany. In many cases schemes were advanced for manufacturing such products in Britain. In other cases surveys were made of alternative sources of supplies from friendly countries, whilst in others again it was found necessary to limit the use of materials for commercial purposes. Admittedly in some types of machine tools, as for example, lathes, where the German product was more efficient, Britain was forced to content herself with substitutes which would do the work adequately.

The disadvantage of these substitutes, however, lay in the fact that their use diverted to home consumption materials and finished products which had hitherto swelled the volume of British export trade, a trade particularly important in wartime. In fact, it is largely through her vast export trade that Britain has maintained her economic supremacy, and the Government has in the past recognized this, not only by the appointment of consuls and trade commissioners, but through the

establishment of the Department of Overseas Trade, the staff of which was actually cut by almost one-third on the outbreak of war. Britain is one of the relatively few countries to maintain a fully staffed Ministry for the exclusive purpose of extending her trading territory.

In wartime export trade becomes at the same time and in equal measure more essential and increasingly difficult. It is more essential because exports pay for imports, and in wartime, although luxury and civilian imports are reduced, the raw and essential materials needed to carry on the armed struggle more than compensate for this, and are bought at a time of rising prices and increased charges. Thus the export trade is a national service, since its promotion brings us the capital for war purchases.

The Board of Trade returns for September, which were the first to be published after the declaration of war, showed that exports of British goods totalling £23,087,200 had declined by 42 per cent. as compared with the previous September. Serious as was this drop, it was less severe than in August 1914, when there were neither Government restrictions nor submarine warfare, and the industrial output of the nation was distinctly less disturbed and the economic results were not so apparent.

The October figures were hardly more encouraging. Exports were down 42 per cent. as compared with October 1938, but showed an increase of 7 per cent. on the nadir reached during the previous month. These figures were, of course, largely due to the evacuation upheaval, delay in organization of the convoy system, and the dislocation caused by sending the British Expeditionary Force to France.

The 50 per cent. jump registered in November represented a return to pre-war levels so far as values were concerned, and showed a large increasingly available foreign exchange. But these figures are deceptive in relation to the volume of trade—a considerable quantity consisted of shipments delayed from the two previous months. The Financial Editor of the *Manchester Guardian* commented that the one conclusion that could safely be drawn from these improved figures was that the obstacles to the execution of contracts thrown up in the first two months of the war by both external and domestic events had been largely overcome. Many shipments were made in November which, but for delays imposed by the licensing system, the time-lag in organizing convoys, and other complications, would have gone out in the two previous months.

It is impossible to calculate to what extent increased prices were responsible for the rise in exports, as the Board of Trade only published

the monetary value and no longer divulged the quantities. Thus the general rise in prices and the devaluation of sterling were wholly incalculable factors. However, as a writer in *The Times* noted, "that the expansion seems to have been above the average in those trades where the average advance of raw material prices since the war has been greatest—yarn exports and cotton prices are cases in point—suggests that some allowance should be made at any rate for the price factor in considering the figures."

The City Editor of the *Observer* calculated the effect of increased prices in the rise in volume from the wholesale price index for materials and manufacture, which was 118 in November against 102 in August, "a rise which, in round figures, accounts for some £6,000,000 of the November total."

The market with which Great Britain traded previous to the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 had unfortunately been reduced and in many cases completely wiped out by the stoppage of trade with Germany and the territories blocked by the Nazi Navy. This loss of business has been computed at 10 per cent. of our total pre-war export trade. In addition to this must be mentioned the increasingly difficult means of communications and advanced cost of freight and insurance, which in many cases made the goods so expensive when they reached their destination that they were uneconomic. Added difficulties were caused through the heavy demands made upon home manufacturers to supply home and military needs. For Britain was determined that her people should be provided with guns *and* butter at all costs. If the export trade was a necessitous war activity the feeding and protection of her people was a war necessity.

To offset these hindrances the war indeed provided many opportunities to the enterprising British manufacturer in his search for new markets. For if our shipping was affected by war conditions, how much more was the overseas trade of Germany, whose small and concentrated naval resources did not make allowance for armed convoys and whose available merchantmen were utilized for the destructive purposes of armed raiders or otherwise lay helpless in home or neutral ports?

It would, however, be a fallacy to assume that Germany's export trade was ruined. The Allied blockade certainly cut off the greater part of her overseas trade; but an appreciable quantity of goods was still carried in neutral ships. However, the total pre-war German trade, both with the belligerent Powers and with neutral States, to whom she no longer had access—such as the American republics—amounted to 46 per cent. of her whole export trade. Germany, then, lost at least

46 per cent. of her previous export trade in this way; but Britain in the first two months of the war lost 42 per cent. of her export trade.

With the outbreak of war, however, Germany was faced with a new trade situation which might repair some of her losses in the old fields. The number of neutral European States, all accessible to Germany, was vastly greater than in 1914. Both the Balkan and Baltic countries bought heavily, especially electrical machinery and industrial plant, including locomotives.

It is difficult to gauge the reduction in Germany's imports, but there could be little doubt that large supplies reached her through the Oslo Powers. By November, Norway, Sweden, and Holland had purchased from America more than £12 million worth of aircraft, foodstuffs, cotton, and petroleum products. Sweden's American orders rose 200 per cent. between August and November.

A writer in the *Economist* foresaw "one effect of the intensification of the British blockade—especially if the mine-laying against which it is a reprisal has the effect of scaring neutral shipping away from the narrow sea—may be to draw the neutrals more closely into Germany's industrial and commercial orbit, an anticipation which is certainly not pleasant to them."

An economic offensive was suggested in commercial circles to outbid Germany in the markets where she bought, and undersell her to her customers. For it was essential that Britain's economic warfare, whilst paralysing the enemy's trade, should supplant it with her own. In the most fruitful market of all—the Americas—there were difficulties. The United States were making desperate and successful attempts to penetrate the commercial markets of the whole American continent. Latin America was, in fact, the largest territory where German trade had successfully ousted British trade in recent years. After the outbreak of war, however, the situation looked like changing. Several South American countries complained of a shortage of heavy industrial and chemical goods, since Germany could no longer arrange for their transportation. None the less, since the War of 1914 the United States had, except in the Argentine, supplanted Britain as the chief source of supply, and it was in countries like Brazil and Chile that it was up to Britain to make her greatest effort. The Government of the Argentine decided to refuse foreign exchange for the purchase elsewhere of goods which could possibly be bought from Great Britain. Furthermore, according to the *Financial Times*, despite denials of the reports that the Argentine had annulled her barter agreement with

Germany, the trading position *vis-à-vis* the Reich and the Argentine was seriously impaired. This was due to Germany's inability to keep her side of the trading agreement.

Whereas the German Government maintained their pre-war prices by means of subsidies, and even guaranteed prompt delivery, extended invitations to foreign buyers to visit Germany, expedited their movements and attended to all passport difficulties, the British export merchant was confronted with Governmental restrictions and impediments. The President of the London Chamber of Commerce referred to the "many interlocking and often interlapping authorities controlling trade" with "objectives aimed at by certain Government orders" which he doubted were "really worth the injury in the economic sphere which they have caused."

The speedy dispatch of samples, an elementary necessity to the export trade, was impossible, owing to the delays in obtaining postal permits from the Chief Censor's office, situated in Liverpool. The prohibition of code necessitated plain-word telegrams at three times the cost, and the disclosure of the export merchant's clients by having to add their names and addresses to the bills of lading, were comparatively minor technical inconveniences. Less excusable inconvenience was caused by the bureaucratic inertia and smug aloofness of the officials at the Customs House, whose arrogance compensated for their incomprehension of the new and often contradictory regulations for specifications and shipping bills, which, once passed, had a reasonable chance of being mislaid or further delayed at the docks. Whereas confronted with equal difficulties, the foreign exchange departments of the banks responded with calm and instantaneous efficiency.

Manufacturers who were desirous of exporting found it impossible to know what prices they would have to pay for their materials. Similarly the Government Controller reserved the right to requisition all supplies and sell them back at a higher rate. This placed the manufacturer in a very awkward position in relation to the export merchant, to whom he could only offer the price ruling at the date of delivery. This made it exceedingly difficult for the export merchant to obtain orders from foreigners, in competition with other nations who were offering firm prices and fixed delivery dates. When these difficulties had been overcome, application had to be made to the Export Licensing Board.

The news of the Export Licensing Board's reluctance to grant licences, and their failure to heed the calls of the export markets, had severe

repercussions. Merchants in the Colonies, believing that the export restrictions in Britain made it impossible for them to obtain their requirements from their normal sources of supply, transferred their custom to neutral countries. In Southern Rhodesia H.M. Trade Commissioner found it necessary to address a letter to the local Press explaining the theoretical position and stressing the undesirability of purchasing from neutral countries at a time when every transfer of money reduced Britain's ability to pay for her purchases of essential war materials. The *Rhodesia Herald* commented :

" This would be unfortunate in time of peace ; but in time of war it is trebly so. . . . At the same time, it is impossible to allocate all the blame for the misunderstanding to the Rhodesian merchant. He was confronted with a truly formidable list of goods, the export of which from Great Britain was prohibited, or only allowed under licence. It was only natural to assume that the British Government preferred that those articles should be kept in Great Britain ; and it would be a natural sequence for the Rhodesian merchant to conclude that, exports of these goods from Great Britain not being encouraged, it would be quite in order for him to buy from foreign countries. The initial mistake of the British Board of Trade, in not elucidating the position when the list was promulgated, having now been rectified, and the process of issuing export licences, either general or special, having been expedited, it is to be hoped that the preference for goods of British manufacture will become stronger than ever."

With the increasing articulation of the public's feelings about export trade it began to be hoped that the Government would offer more than verbal support to export merchants. The irreparable damage incurred by Britain's export trade during the War of 1914 was not forgotten. In South America, as has been shown above, the United States and Germany supplanted the British in their foothold. Holland's chief supplier had previously been Britain, but Britain had long been supplanted by Germany and Italy. It was of supreme necessity that Britain should recover these markets in order to pay for her food and raw materials, and at the same time save invaluable man-power. Industry organized its own output to allow for expansion of overseas trade in a commendable manner. At a time of rising costs the Stoke potters reduced their export prices in some cases by as much as 10 per cent. It was, however, impossible for the export merchant to take full advantage of the industrialists' action without a positive, co-operative policy on the part of the Government.

Unless Britain was to be denuded of her foreign securities, of her gold reserves and capital resources, the exportation of her products was the only means of meeting the economic burden of the war, of crippling the enemy economically, and of securing the nation against the economic demobilization of the peace.

In those countries where German, Austrian, Czecho-Slovakian, and Polish goods were formerly bought, British traders searched for new markets. In the vast continent of Africa new markets were sought daily by men skilled in trade research. They cultivated territories formerly supplied by Germany or her immediate victims and concentrated on finding and satisfying their needs. Trade within the Empire was stimulated, and the Colonies and Dominions became bigger and bigger buyers because they supplied us with an increasing quantity of raw materials which advanced in price. To pay for this they required more goods from us.

As in most fields of activity, there was considerable dislocation and confusion at the outbreak of war, which was unnecessarily increased by the bureaucratic methods of Government officials and the staggering application of regulations. For example, immediately after the declaration of war certain restrictions were imposed upon exports. It was forbidden to export certain goods, and others required licences; but it was not disclosed which goods were on the prohibited list or even in all cases those which required licences. Frequently weeks passed without satisfaction being given by the Export Licensing Department of the Board of Trade. In fact, at one time their entire stock of application forms was exhausted, and special notices had to be prepared advising exporters to have similar forms printed at their own expense. Formalities multiplied. Forms of every shade imaginable were issued for different types of ferrous metal. Separate forms were required for permission to buy and to export, and by the time they were received, the chances were that it was impossible to obtain the goods owing to shortage of raw materials, or impossible to export as no steamers were available. Exchange restrictions also operated against the British export merchant if he had to obtain supplies from a third country, and the boats which had been instructed to carry his goods were often commandeered by the Government without any warning.

Much of this was remedied. Licences were soon being issued faster than applications were received, and in time all arrears were overtaken.

Considerable attention was drawn to insurance costs, which export merchants claimed to be wholly unreasonable, and which they were unable to pass on to the overseas buyers, more especially as contracts had often been entered into before the war. Whilst the supplier had to insure his stock in order to meet the Government's demands, and could thus claim *force majeure* in breaking contractual terms, he was not entitled to pass on more than a fair proportion of the premium to overseas buyers. In point of fact, there were fairly general increases in price, sometimes of 50, 60, or even 75 per cent., which clearly amounted to profiteering, so it was not surprising that the exporters were among the first to welcome the Government's appropriate legislation.

Whilst it might well be wondered why the supplier was prepared to advance prices indiscriminately at the risk of losing business both in hand and in prospect, soaring prices at home diverted many commodities from their legitimate overseas market. Regular lines for the colonial markets which included materials essential for black-out purposes and for which previous to the war no demand existed were no longer available for export. As the home demand increased, the manufacturer looked for fresh excuses by way of surcharges and excessive insurance premiums to prevent the Colonial buyer from obtaining this article which had hitherto been earmarked for his territory at an infinitely lower price. Domestic demands multiplied with evacuation, and the mushroom growth of A.R.P. and A.F.S. organizations exhausted remaining stock until raw materials were getting perilously low. However, thanks to the enormous success of the convoy system these stocks of raw material were replenished, but at a price which often made the finished article too dear for the overseas market.

A further difficulty which reacted against British exports was the censorship, which might delay a letter from Italy by three weeks, and the reply by a further fortnight. Several cases were reported of firms in neutral countries despairing of a reply from Britain due to such delays, and sending inquiries to Germany, where, owing to speedier postal communications, the orders were placed to our detriment.

On the other hand, there were many companies, especially those engaged in industries which required steel for their products—as, for example, tubular-furniture manufacturers—who found themselves without stocks of steel at the outbreak of war, and thus unable even to quote prices. It is true that they were awaiting delivery, but meanwhile foreign orders with firm delivery dates had to be turned down, as there

was considerable speculation as to both the date of the arrival of the raw materials and the release of the goods by the Government.

Germany undoubtedly benefited from these flaws in the organization of raw materials. She fought every inch, with her utter disregard of insufficiency for her own people, in order to capture every available market. This was necessary so that she might provide herself with purchasing power in those countries, with which to pursue the war with added industrial and material vigour. The trading commission she established in Belgium was significant when taken together with her desperate efforts in the Balkan countries to capture these markets.

The British Government in its turn was not completely inactive. In addition to the existing departments in Whitehall, loosely co-ordinated Ministries were established for Supply, Economic Warfare, Food, and Shipping; but with all this duplication of clumsy and slow-moving bureaucracy, it was left to the well-experienced Federation of British Industries to set up a clearing office where orders from abroad might be placed with firms that were likely to be in a position to carry them out. By this co-operative endeavour on the part of industrialists themselves, they hoped to keep an available margin of output for export in addition to their home demands. There again the stumbling-block was the Government, which failed to declare its policy regarding the extension of export credit facilities. Meanwhile British manufacturers were prevented from submitting tenders to foreign countries, even if they had the material required. Whilst competing firms abroad quoted and guaranteed delivery dates, the British companies did not know whether they would be allowed to carry out the work until the Government disclosed its commercial foreign policy.

It was felt that such a policy had been purposely delayed until the trade relations between belligerent and neutral countries became stabilized. Export licences and embargoes were purely expedients which were but the first steps towards a rearrangement of trade relations, which remained very difficult to define.

Many exporters experienced a great increase in inquiries and orders from abroad. This was due to new circumstances which could be expected to continue, such as general apprehension that further supplies would not be available. This influenced the overseas buyer to purchase far larger stocks than was his custom. However, a few industries had reason to anticipate the maintenance, if not the strengthening, of their export trade. Probably the coal trade was amongst the first to

benefit. This was largely due to the discontinuation of German ocean shipments, and under licence British shipments went ahead briskly. Even if the Germans were successful in exploiting the Polish coal-mines in Upper Silesia, it would be very difficult for her to maintain her export trade across the Baltic Sea and with neighbouring countries. In fact, with Germany's evacuation of the Saar, where her pre-war coal was produced and which became the centre of the Western fighting zone, Britain expected to possess a virtual coal monopoly in Europe. Trade with South America, France, and Spain made considerable strides, and arrangements were made for Britain to ship large quantities elsewhere.

She expected to reach a yearly production level of 270,000,000 tons, which would necessitate, however small the margin of profit, the re-opening of a number of mines then closed owing to high production costs.

The shipping companies shared in this new coal prosperity, but although freight rates rose sharply after the outbreak of war, this was offset to a large extent by increased charges for insurance, war-risk bonuses to seamen, and other costs. Voyages frequently took twice as long under the convoy system; but the results justified it, especially when compared with similar periods of the Great War. Long before they were driven to desperation by the British naval blockade, German raiders destroyed a vast volume of British tonnage. In fact, during the first four months of the Great War 217,590 tons were sunk by German raiders. Without a powerful enemy High Sea Fleet of comparable strength to the British Fleet, potential raiders could be dealt with more easily than in the last war because the necessity for maintaining so large a proportion of British men-of-war in home waters was not so great.

On the whole, the large British manufacturer was in a more favourable position in relation to his overseas trade than he was in 1914, when he was losing markets both to foreign competition and growing industries in distant lands. These industries may have been primitive, but when supplies from the Home Country were difficult to obtain, they sufficed for local needs. Since 1918, however, the enterprising industrialist has opened branch factories throughout the Empire and often in foreign lands, which helps to relieve home industrial capacity and at the same time avoid the fear of foreign encroachment in these markets.

Promising inquiries showed that the increase in the price of raw materials was creating a bigger market in such territories for luxury

goods, for owing to the drop in the home demand, non-essential industries were enabled to keep going, whilst otherwise they would have been forced to close down, with resultant unemployment and foreign advantage.

The most considerable advantage over the War of 1914 lay in the early inauguration of the convoy system. After the preliminary dislocation of sea traffic, sailing dates became once more regular and punctual.

As in other activities, the early confusions gradually disappeared. This was not only on account of the trade's domestic machinery, but also owing to the realization by the Government that, with the undermining of British connexions abroad, and the need for finance to pay for the war, the export trade could help to meet effectively the economic necessities of the struggle.

It will be noticed throughout this survey that the transition from peacetime conditions to a state of war was accompanied by far-reaching changes in the national life of the country. Vast readjustments took place, designed to prepare the country for the prosecution of a war against totalitarianism. The most obvious change was the increased element of uncertainty in all business relationships. This was largely due to the enormous difficulties which arose in transport and communications. Railway trucks and motor-lorries were commandeered by the Government for the transport of soldiers and supplies. Merchant vessels were taken over by the Government to carry the British Expeditionary Force across the Channel. The transport of goods for civilian needs became a serious problem, aggravated by the black-out regulations, which hampered all night traffic, shunting, and the loading and unloading of goods. Petrol rationing increased these difficulties still further, especially as it considerably disorganized the postal services. Under such circumstances no business man could be sure of fulfilling his contracts, and the intricate commercial life of the nation suffered a manifest loss of tempo.

Another great change was to be found in the altered nature of consumption. Wartime demands obviously differed considerably from those of peace. Food, drink, fuel, and clothing, as has been already shown, maintained their consumption levels.

This was all the more remarkable considering that, in spite of the fact that almost a quarter of a million men had left the country for France, unemployment rose steeply. Many employees were dismissed, owing to the fear of declining trade, many domestic servants lost their positions owing to evacuation and the closing of large houses, and certain industries

suffered acute hardship, as, for example, the fishing industry, owing to the commandeering of trawlers by the Government.

One of the most far-reaching dislocations of British commerce due to the war was caused by the difficulties in the importation of foods and materials, whether raw or half-finished. Many of Britain's peacetime exports had been based on such commodities, and many of them were curtailed or completely stopped by the Government in order to avoid undue pressure on sterling. The pre-war tendency for Great Britain to buy more from abroad than she sold there was accentuated. The need for importing large quantities of iron ore, foodstuffs, and other goods indispensable to the prosecution of the war, together with the decline in British exports, has already been dealt with. In order to maintain the stock of bullion and foreign currency position as far as possible, the Government subjected exports as well as imports to a licensing system. The effects were equally grave in both fields of trade, and they were considerably increased by the German sinking of many of the neutral vessels which would have carried the goods. Furthermore, many neutral countries subjected their export trade to a system of licensing by which they refused to trade in essential materials. British imports were still further disturbed by the policy of many neutrals in withdrawing their customary credit facilities and selling goods only for cash. It was no longer possible to buy raw materials in foreign lands, to ship them to Britain, and to pay for them after the manufactured products had been sold. Thus it was now Britain rather than the foreign merchants who had to finance the time-lag between the buying of raw materials and the final sale of manufactured goods. In this way a great change took place in the character of foreign trade, which was detrimental to all imports not directly connected with National Defence.

This change in the character of British importation was accompanied by a total revolution in trading methods. An increasing part of the import trade of the country was removed from the hands of the private individual and transferred to the Government, who entered the foreign market as a buyer on an unprecedented scale. Wheat, flour, cotton, and rubber were all acquired in large quantities. In addition, the vast surplus of some materials produced in the Dominions and in various friendly nations was taken over in its entirety by the Government at pre-war prices. A barter agreement was concluded with the United States Government by which Empire rubber was exchanged for American cotton. In some cases this Government buying took place through the

agency of the large importing houses, whilst in others agreements were concluded by Civil Servants. But in every case the buyer was backed by the vast financial resources of the Government.

The Government monopoly of so many imports naturally limited the stocks available for many private enterprises. Supplies of timber, cellulose, and wood-pulp were particularly affected, and powerful propaganda was launched urging the public to conserve supplies of paper, which depends on these articles for its manufacture. The size of newspapers had to be considerably reduced, and it became increasingly difficult to buy them in the streets without a regular order. Local councils were everywhere organized to collect waste paper, and a Paper Control Board was set up. So great was the need for economy indeed that the Imperial Tobacco Company decided on these grounds to give up the distribution of cigarette cards.

The shortage of many commodities, together with the Government's scheme for compulsory war-risks insurance, were responsible for a rise in many prices, as costs were passed on from the manufacturer to the wholesaler, from the wholesaler to the retailer, and from the retailer to the public. Prices were still further increased by the depreciation of the currency in relation to the currencies of neutral countries, especially American dollars.

Many alleged that these increases were due to profiteering. But profiteering means a sudden increase in prices which is not balanced by any apparent increase in costs. It is merely the result either of greater demand or of a shortage of supplies. No one could call a rise in prices dictated by inevitable increases in costs profiteering, and in this way, for instance, few queried Marks and Spencer's decision to raise the maximum price of their goods from 5s. to 5s. 11d. Undoubtedly there was a certain amount of profiteering, but, as we have shown earlier, it was on a limited scale. Some firms attempted to couple sales, only supplying the customer with the article he desired if he would agree to make some specified additional purchase; but the Government took a firm stand in fixing prices and in inflicting severe penalties, so that the practice was soon put down.

The most vital effect of the war upon finance was the difficulty both private individuals and commercial concerns encountered in borrowing money. Conditions were so unsettled that sellers demanded good terms to induce them to part with ready cash. This is one interpretation of the raised bank rate, which indicated that the Bank of England was unwilling

to part with cash in return for bills of exchange unless those bills could be offered on unusually favourable conditions.

This dearth of money reinforced a general lack of initiative in the money market. Few private individuals or firms had any desire to borrow on unattractive terms under the unsettled conditions of war. Apart from the armaments industries there was little industrial expansion, with the result that the money market was extremely quiet.

(This phenomenon could also be ascribed to the lack of desire of the Government at that time to borrow money needed for the prosecution of the war. The official policy was to preserve intact the credit of the Government for use at a later stage in the conduct of war finance. There was thus little trade in ready cash entirely due to wartime conditions. As a result the Banks were inactive. There were few new enterprises which needed to be financed and fewer uses than usual for the capital accumulated by the banks. Money trade was stagnant.)

Much the same can be said of the trade in stocks and shares. General uncertainty, heavy taxation, and rising price levels were inducing people and institutions to reduce their holdings. Prices of shares tended consistently towards new low levels. The Government intervened to fix minimum rates for various stock ; but this resulted in further reduction of activity on the Stock Exchange. Even if there had been any temptation to speculate, it no longer existed after minimum prices had been fixed.

The insurance market, on the other hand, passed through a period of unprecedented activity owing to the desire of the public to insure against air-raid losses, and war-risk insurance for sea-going vessels was very brisk. The insurance market was spoilt to some extent for the companies by Government competition. Compulsory Government insurance of businesses against air-raid risks, Government schemes for compensation against air-raid losses, and similar Governmental activities reduced the prospective clients for insurance policies with insurance firms.

The Foreign Exchange market suffered severely. Again, as in the case of the stock markets, minimum and maximum rates of exchange were fixed by the Government which tended to reduce normal activity. The shrinkage of private exporting and importing trade also contributed to this result.

Thus with the exception of the insurance market the effect of the war on trade, money, and securities was wholly depressing.

The whole trading situation can be epitomized as the extension of

Government control of economic activity to the point of a fully planned economy. Hardly a single field of industry or commerce escaped the long arm of the State. Fixed prices, assured supplies, regulated sales, and supervised production were all introduced into the existing framework of distribution and gladly accepted in the interests of the nation. It might almost be said that the main effect of the war upon trade was the nationalization of trading activities without the subjection of individual enterprise.

Britain was faced with the twin dangers and expedencies of forced saving or inflation. The economic life of the country was dislocated. The stimulus to enterprise was eliminated. It might well have been contended that all classes prospered under the comparative economic *laissez-faire* of the War of 1914, whereas now all shared in the prevailing economic suffering. Forced saving was contrary to British traditions and current political thought. Inflation would starve out the large *rentier* sections of the population. And as in all problems, a solution was considered possible and was sought.

Official figures and persistent anomalies contradicted the Government's oratorical professions and policy. The vast, slow-moving, and infrequently alert bureaucracy could not cope with the many problems which arose almost daily.